REASONABLE ANSWERS

1 PETER 3:15

By R. Kiser

The Book I wish I had as a new Christian

Table of Contents pg 2

Table of Contents pg 1, 2, 3, 4

How to use this Book: For longer Topics clicking on these links will bring you to another Topic Index page that breaks down the Topic into further detail. You can then click on a link from there to go to the part that interest you the most or turn the page and start reading that Topic at the beginning.

Shorter Topics do not have a topic index.
However at any time you can click on Table of Contents pg 1, 2, 3, 4 to come back to the part of the Table of Contents that you want here.

Foundational Truths of Christianity

Who is Jesus Christ? (pg. 6)

The Trinity (pg. 28)

What does it mean to be saved? (pg. 47)

Grace verses Works (pg. 47)

Did Jesus rise from the dead? (pg. 60)

The return of Jesus Christ (pg. 88)

Is the Bible the word of God? (pg. 103)

The Doctrine of Hell (pg.143)

Satan (pg. 156)

Are the beliefs in the Church today the same as what was taught in the 1st Century? (pg. 169)

Is it important what a Church teaches? (pg. 179)

Christian Life

Why should I study the Bible & How do I go about it? (pg.183)

Why should a Christian be able to defend their faith? (pg. 192)

Prayer (pg. 197)

Finding God's will for your life (pg. 215)

Table of Contents pg 3

Table of Contents pg 1, 2, 3, 4

Special Interest

Does God exist? (pg. 227)

Jesus verses all other religions (pg. 234)

Isn't the story of Jonah just a big fish story? (pg. 239)

A Defense of miracles (pg. 248)

Do all miracles come from God? (pg. 251)

A glimpse into the heart of God (pg. 253)

Do babies go to heaven? (pg. 254)

Who do you envy? (pg. 255)

Why read the Old Testament? (pg. 257)

Are you a self centered person? (pg. 258)

A common mistake made by nonbelievers (pg. 259)

Truth (pg. 261)

If that is Christianity I want no part of it! (pg. 266)

God is on trial by mankind (pg. 267)

My own testimony (pg. 281)

Poems (pg. 283)

Table of Contents pg 3

Table of Contents pg 1, 2, 3, 4

Non- Christian Beliefs

Psychics, Astrology etc. (pg. 295)

Should a Christian be a Mason? (pg. 304)

What is a Cult? (pg. 317)

Mormonism (pg. 320)

Jehovah Witnesses (pg.453)

Life's Stories and Lessons Learned

The Tree (pg. 516)

The Truck (pg. 517)

Linda and Andy the Dog's Birthday! (pg. 518)

Statement of Faith (pg. 521)

Bibliography (pg. 522)

Table of Contents pg 4

Table of Contents pg 1, 2, 3, 4

Links for your connivance:

Use Control plus right click to go to any of the following websites or copy and paste into the address bar on your web browser.

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If you would those PDF books click on the Reasonable Answers link above.

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Table of Contents pg 1, 2, 3, 4

Jesus claimed to be the Christ, the Son of God and he claimed to be God. Now that is quite a claim. Is there any evidence to support this claim? What about prophecies concerning him?

You can click on **"Who is Jesus Christ?"** to start reading at the beginning of this topic or use the topic index to jump to the part that interest you most.

TOPIC INDEX

Who is Jesus Christ? (pg. 7)

Overview of content in this section is as follows:

Unlike some so called deities that people worship in the world today, Jesus is not a myth, but he is a historical person. (pg. 7)

Some people would ask, "Couldn't Jesus have just been a good man and a great teacher and nothing more?" (pg. 8)

Unlike other religious leaders Jesus was told about in some detail in prophecy before he was born. (pg. 8)

Jesus is the only religious leader in history that predicted his own death and resurrection and then actually died and then rose from the dead. (pg. 18)

So who did Jesus claim to be? (pg. 19)

So how important is it to accept Jesus' claims of who he is? (pg. 21)

Who does the Bible declare Jesus to be? (pg. 21)

Does Jesus posses the attributes of God? (pg. 23)

THE TERM SON OF GOD: (pg. 26)

Historic Christianity-
The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints: (Mormons)
The Watchtower Society: (Jehovah Witnesses)

What did the Christians think in the 1st century after Jesus, did they believe the same as what Christians teach today about Jesus? (pg. 27)

Table of Contents pg 1, 2, 3, 4

WHO IS JESUS CHRIST?

This is an important question and depending upon who you ask, you will get a variety of answers. Jesus himself asked His disciples this question (Matt 16:13-17).

"Now when Jesus came into the district of Caesarea Philippi, He began asking His disciples, saying, 'Who do people say that the Son of Man is?' And they said, 'Some say John the Baptist; and others, Elijah; but still others, Jeremiah, or one of the prophets.' He said to them, 'But who do you say that I am?' And Simon Peter answered and said, 'Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.' And Jesus answered and said to him, 'Blessed are you, Simon Barjona, because flesh and blood did not reveal this to you, but My Father who is in heaven.'[C5]

Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God. This is quite a claim and it is reasonable for someone to ask, "Why should I believe such a claim?" In today's world, even the term "Son of God" means different things to different people. So what makes Jesus different than other religious leaders or other deities that people worship? Is there any evidence to validate such a claim? This will be the focal point of this chapter.

Topic Index

Unlike some so-called deities that people worship in the world today, Jesus is not a myth, but He is a historical person. Flavius Josephus was a Jewish Historian during AD 37–c.100. His works are the principal source for the history of the Jews from the reign of Antiochus Epiphanes (BC 17–63) to the fall of Masada (AD 73). There is a very interesting statement regarding Jesus recorded in;

The Works of Josephus, Book 18,Chapter 3, pages 63 and 64: **(PDF pg. 684)**
"Now, there was about this time Jesus, a wise man, if it be lawful to call him a man, for he was a doer of wonderful works—a teacher of such men as receive the truth with pleasure .He drew over to him both many of the Jews, and many of the Gentiles. He was [the] Christ; and when Pilate, at the suggestion of the principal men amongst us, had condemned him to the cross, those that loved him at the first did not forsake him, for he appeared to them alive again the third day, as the divine prophets had foretold these and ten thousand other wonderful things concerning him; and the tribe of Christians, so named from him, are not extinct at this day.[D2]

This is only one of many proofs that could be quoted to verify Jesus was indeed a real person in history. This quote also verifies parts of the Gospel story. We are not talking of some myth or fairy tale, but of historical facts.

Table of Contents pg 1, 2, 3, 4

Topic Index

Some people would ask, "Couldn't Jesus have just been a good man and a great teacher and nothing more?" Jesus Himself did not allow room for this view. Jesus claimed to be from heaven and He was the only way in which mankind could come to God the Father (John 3:13, John 14:6). A good man or a great teacher would not make such claims if he did not believe them to be true. If he made these claims knowing they were false then he would not be a good man or a great teacher, but rather he would be a liar. On the other hand, if Jesus believed these claims to be true and they were not, that would make Him a crazy person. Usually people who say Jesus was merely a good man or a teacher are not willing to call Jesus either a liar or a crazy person. They simply have not thought out this concept very far. Jesus had to be a liar, a crazy person, or the Son of God. He simply did not leave room in His teachings to be labeled only a great man or a teacher. He himself claimed to be much more!

Topic Index

Unlike other religious leaders Jesus was prophesized about, in some detail, before He was born. The Dead Sea Scrolls are ancient manuscripts that were discovered in 1948. They are proof that the Old Testament books date to before Jesus was born. This means they could not have been written later, to merely make it look as though Jesus fulfilled these prophecies. The Dead Sea Scrolls contain a portion of every book in the Old Testament with the exception of Esther.

Some people don't think that the stories about Jesus in the New Testament are true. However there are other historical records besides the Bible that provide evidence that Jesus was in fact a real person. The stories concerning Jesus in the New Testament were being circulated in the same area where Jesus lived and traveled. It was here that the church was established and grew. This took place in the same time frame among the same people who knew Jesus before He was crucified. If the events that are recorded in the New Testament were manufactured or highly exaggerated, church growth should have been nearly impossible. We see in the book of Acts the people who lived in that era and objected to Christianity did not deny that Jesus taught and did the things recorded in the New Testament letters. The Jews considered the teachings blasphemous or ludicrous and commanded the disciples to be quiet. However they acknowledged that Jesus did in fact teach such things, and perform what the people considered miracles. In a court of law when the hostile witness agrees with the defense, it is considered a fact. Imagine a murder trial. The prosecuting attorney says that David murdered Albert. The defense gets up and says David did indeed kill Albert, but it was an accident. Since both sides agree that David killed Albert, this would be considered a fact, and it would not be called into question. Since the actual events regarding Jesus' ministry and crucifixion are not disputed by those opposed to Christianity in that time frame, the events themselves should be considered fact.

Table of Contents pg 1, 2, 3, 4

Following are some prophecies concerning Jesus Christ in the Old Testament before He was born and the fulfillment by Him in the New Testament. You can find this and other prophecies that Jesus fulfilled in greater detail in Josh McDowell's book Evidence that Demands a Verdict.[A1] This book also supplies an abundance of evidence for the reliability of the Bible. Keep in mind I am only mentioning a few of the prophecies concerning the Messiah that were fulfilled in Jesus. Fritz Ridenour in the book Who Says? [A2] declares that there are some 333 prophecies concerning the Messiah which are fulfilled in Jesus Christ.

1. BORN OF A VIRGIN; PROPHECY (Isaiah 7:14)

"Therefore the Lord Himself will give you a sign: behold, a virgin will be with child and bear a son, and she will call His name Immanuel."

BORN OF A VIRGIN; FULFILLMENT (Matthew 1:18-25; see also Luke 1:26-35)

"Now the birth of Jesus Christ was as follows. When His mother Mary had been betrothed to Joseph, before they came together she was found to be with child by the Holy Spirit. And Joseph her husband, being a righteous man, and not wanting to disgrace her, desired to put her away secretly. But when he had considered this, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, 'Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife; for that which has been conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit .And she will bear a Son; and you shall call His name Jesus, for it is He who will save His people from their sins.' Now all this took place that what was spoken by the Lord through the prophet might be fulfilled, saying, 'Behold, the virgin shall be with child, and shall bear a Son, and they shall call His name Immanuel,' which translated means, 'God with us.' And Joseph arose from his sleep, and did as the angel of the Lord commanded him, and took her as his wife, and kept her a virgin until she gave birth to a Son; and he called His name Jesus." (Jesus was literally "God with us"[John.1:1 and 14] and the name Jesus means "Jehovah is salvation," i. e., "is the Savior".)

Table of Contents pg 1, 2, 3, 4

MESSIAH TRACED TO ABRAHAM; PROPHECY (Genesis 22:18; see also Genesis 12:2-3)

This had to be through David, Jesse, Judah, Jacob and Isaac to fulfill prophecy.

The context here is the Lord talking to Abraham: "And in your seed all the nations of the earth shall be blessed, because you have obeyed My voice."

MESSIAH TRACED TO ABRAHAM; FULFILLMENT (Matthew 1:1; see also Galatians 3:16)

The book of the genealogy of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham. To fulfill this prophecy, Jesus had to be from the bloodline of this one man. I have not been able to find that anybody from Jesus' time period tried to argue that He was born of the wrong bloodline. The letters which are now our New Testament openly declare and trace the bloodline of Jesus back to Abraham. During Biblical times, a person's lineage was considered to be of extreme importance.

The Messiah was also to be born through Isaac (Genesis 21:12); this is shown fulfilled in Luke 3:23-34 and Matthew 1:2-16. Since Abraham had two sons — Isaac and Ishmael — God at this point cut off half of the lineage of Abraham. The Messiah also had to come through the line of Jacob (Numbers 24:17, Genesis 35:10-12). We can see this fulfilled in Luke 3:23-24 and 1:33; and Matthew 1:2. Isaac had two sons — Jacob and Esau — so God here eliminates half of the line of Isaac. The Messiah was to come from the tribe of Judah (Genesis 49:10, Micah 5:2).The fulfillment of this can be seen in Luke 3:23-33, Matthew 1:2, and Hebrews 7:14. The twelve tribes of the Hebrew nation developed from Jacob's twelve sons. God here cut off 11/12 of the tribes of Israel. The Messiah was to come through Jesse (Isaiah 11:1 and 10). We can see this fulfilled in Luke 3:23-32 and Matthew 1:6-16. The Messiah was to come through David (Jeremiah 23:5, 2 Samuel 7:12-16, Psalms 132:11). The fulfillment of this can be seen in Luke 3:23-31, Matthew 1:1; 9:27; and 15:22, Acts 13:22-23, and Revelation 22:16. Jesse had at least eight sons (see 1 Samuel 16:10,11). God now cuts off all of these except David.

It should be clear that the odds are definitely stacking up against somebody fulfilling this prophecy by being born through the correct lineage. Remember this is something that cannot be fulfilled intentionally; it takes the divine act of God to accomplish this.

Table of Contents pg 1, 2, 3, 4

3. BORN IN BETHLEHEM; PROPHECY (Micah 5:2)

"But as for you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, too little to be among the clans of Judah, from you One will go forth for me to be ruler in Israel. His goings forth are from long ago, from the days of eternity."

BORN IN BETHLEHEM; FULFILLMENT (Matthew 2:1; see also John 7:42, Matthew 2:4-8, Luke 2:4-7) (His days are from eternity — Colossians.1:17)

“Now after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king, behold, magi from the east arrived in Jerusalem...”

Not only does a person have no control over what family through which he is born, there is also no control concerning the location of birth. The Messiah had to be born in Bethlehem, not Jerusalem, or anywhere else, to fulfill prophecy. Where He was born was not disputed in Jesus' day.

PRESENTED WITH GIFTS; PROPHECY (Isaiah 60:6; see also Psalm 72:10)

"A multitude of camels will cover you, the young camels of Midian and ephah; all those from Sheba will come; they will bring gold and frankincense, and will bear good news of the praises of the LORD.”

PRESENTED WITH GIFTS; FULFILLMENT (Matthew 2:1-11)

1 — “Now after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king, behold, magi from the east arrived in Jerusalem, ...

11 — And they came into the house and saw the Child with Mary His mother; and they fell down and worshipped Him; and opening their treasures they presented to Him gifts of gold and frankincense and myrrh.”

A person has no control over what gifts someone may present to him as a child — i.e., it is not very likely that Jesus could have manipulated the situation so that the magi would travel a distance to give him these gifts.

Table of Contents pg 1, 2, 3, 4

5. HIS ZEAL FOR THE HOUSE OF GOD; PROPHECY (Psalm 69:9)

"For zeal for Thy house has consumed me, and the reproaches of those who reproach Thee have fallen on me."

HIS ZEAL FOR THE HOUSE OF GOD; FULFILLMENT (John 2:15-17)

"And He made a scourge of cords, and drove them all out of the temple, with the sheep and the oxen; and He poured out the coins of the moneychangers, and overturned their tables; and to those who were selling the doves He said, 'Take these things away; stop making My Father's house a house of merchandise.' His disciples remembered that it was written, 'Zeal for Thy house will consume me.'"

6. PROCEEDED BY MESSENGER; PROPHECY (Isaiah 40:3)

"A voice is calling, 'Clear the way for the LORD in the wilderness; make smooth in the desert a highway for our God.'"

PROCEEDED BY MESSENGER; FULFILLMENT (Matthew 3:1-2; see also Matthew 3:3-11, 11:10, John 1:23, Luke 1:17)

"Now in those days John the Baptist came, preaching in the wilderness of Judea, saying, 'Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.'"

PERFORMER OF MIRACLES; PROPHECY (Isaiah 35:5-6; see also Isaiah 32:3-4)

"Then the eyes of the blind will be opened, and the ears of the deaf will be unstopped.Then the lame will leap like a deer, and the tongue of the dumb will shout for joy."

PERFORMER OF MIRACLES; FULFILLMENT (Luke 7:20-22; see also Luke 7:20-22, Matthew 9:32-35; 11:4-6, John 5:5-9)

"And when the men had come to Him, they said, 'John the Baptist has sent us to You,' saying, 'Are You the Expected One, or do we look for someone else?' At that very time He cured many people of diseases and afflictions and evil spirits; and He granted sight to many who were blind. And He answered and said to them, 'Go and report to John what you have seen and heard: the blind receive sight, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, the poor have the gospel preached to them.'"

Josephus, the Jewish historian in that time period, indicated that Jesus performed miracles.

Table of Contents pg 1, 2, 3, 4

8. TEACHER OF PARABLES; PROPHECY (Psalm 78:2)

"I will open my mouth in a parable; I will utter dark sayings of old..."

TEACHER OF PARABLES; FULFILLMENT (Matthew 13:34)

"All these things Jesus spoke to the multitudes in parables, and He did not speak to them without a parable..."

9. HE WAS TO ENTER JERUSALEM ON A DONKEY; PROPHECY (Zechariah 9:9)

"Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion! Shout in triumph, O daughter of Jerusalem! Behold, your king is coming to you; He is just and endowed with salvation, humble, and mounted on a donkey, even on a colt, the foal of a donkey."

HE WAS TO ENTER JERUSALEM ON A DONKEY; FULFILLMENT (Luke 19:35-38)

"And they brought it to Jesus, and they threw their garments on the colt, and put Jesus on it. And as He was going, they were spreading their garments in the road. And as He was now approaching, near the descent of the Mount of Olives, the whole multitude of the disciples began to praise God joyfully with a loud voice for all the miracles which they had seen, saying, 'Blessed is the King who comes in the name of the Lord; Peace in heaven and glory in the highest!'"

Jesus could have purposely tried to fulfill this by riding the donkey into town. Yet it is unlikely that he could have persuaded the crowd to behave as they did. That they did on their own.

BETRAYED BY A FRIEND; PROPHECY (Psalm 41:9; see also Psalm 55:12-14) " my close friend, in whom I trusted, who ate my bread, has lifted up his heel against me."

BETRAYED BY A FRIEND; FULFILLMENT (John 13:21-26; see also Matthew 10:4 and 26:47-50)

"When Jesus had said this, He became troubled in spirit, and testified, and said, 'Truly, truly, I say to you, that one of you will betray Me.' The disciples began looking at one another, at a loss to know of which one He was speaking. There was reclining on Jesus' breast one of His disciples, whom Jesus loved. Simon Peter therefore gestured to him, and said to him, 'Tell us who it is of whom He is speaking.' He, leaning back thus on Jesus' breast, said to Him, 'Lord, who is it?' Jesus therefore answered, 'That is the one for whom I shall dip the morsel and give it to him.' So when He had dipped the morsel, He took and gave it to Judas, the son of Simon Iscariot."

Table of Contents pg 1, 2, 3, 4

It seems unlikely that someone would purposely try to deceive someone else into thinking he was something that he was not — especially knowing that the deception would lead to his own death — simply to fulfill a prophecy.

SOLD FOR THIRTY PIECES OF SILVER, POTTERS FIELD PURCHASED; PROPHECY (Zechariah 11:12-13)

"'If it is good in your sight, give me my wages; but if not, never mind!' So they weighed out thirty shekels of silver as my wages. Then the LORD said to me, 'Throw it to the potter, that magnificent price at which I was valued by them.' So I took the thirty shekels of silver and threw them to the potter in the house of the LORD."

SOLD FOR THIRTY PIECES OF SILVER, POTTERS FIELD PURCHASED; FULFILLMENT (Matthew 27:5-7)

"And he threw the pieces of silver into the sanctuary and departed; and he went away and hanged himself. And the chief priests took the pieces of silver and said, 'It is not lawful to put them into the temple treasury, since it is the price of blood.' And they counseled together and with the money bought the Potter's Field as a burial place for strangers."

Notice the detail here: an exact amount of coins is mentioned, and it was silver, not gold; the money was thrown, not placed; this happened in the house of the Lord; the money was used to buy the Potters field.

12. HE WAS SILENT BEFORE ACCUSERS; PROPHECY (Isaiah 53:7)

"He was oppressed and He was afflicted, yet He did not open His mouth; like a lamb that is led to slaughter, and like a sheep that is silent before its shearers, so He did not open His mouth."

HE WAS SILENT BEFORE ACCUSSERS; FULFILLMENT (Matthew 27:12-14)

"And while He was being accused by the chief priests and elders, He made no answer.
Then Pilate said to Him, 'Do You not hear how many things they testify against You?'
And He did not answer him with regard to even a single charge, so that the governor was quite amazed."

Table of Contents pg 1, 2, 3, 4

13. HANDS AND FEET PIERCED, LOTS CAST FOR GARMENTS; PROPHECY

(Psalm 22:16-18)

"a band of evildoers has encompassed me; they pierced my hands and my feet. I can count all my bones. They look, they stare at me; They divide my garments among them, and for my clothing they cast lots."

HANDS AND FEET PIERCED, LOTS CAST FOR GARMENTS; FULFILLMENT (Luke 23:33-35; see also John 19:23-24)
"And when they came to the place called The Skull, there they crucified Him and the criminals, one on the right and the other on the left. But Jesus was saying, 'Father, forgive them; for they do not know what they are doing.' And they cast lots, dividing up His garments among themselves. And the people stood by, looking on. And even the rulers were sneering at Him, saying, 'He saved others; let Him save Himself if this is the Christ of God, His Chosen One.'' (John 20:25 and Luke 24:39-40 show that they used nails, which pierced His hands and feet, during His crucifixion.)

Crucifixion originated with the Phoenicians and Persians. It was practiced from the 6th century BC until the 4th century AD. The Roman emperor Constantine banned crucifixion in 337 AD. The 22nd Psalm is attributed to David around BC 1000. It is said that a persons' bones become prominent during crucifixion. The pierced hands and feet came from being nailed to the cross. This means the results of crucifixion and the type of death Jesus would die were described before crucifixion was invented!

Ref. NASB,C2 ABC's of the Bible by Readers Digest A3 , International Bible Encyclopedia C1, Grolier Multimedia Encyclopedia G1. The Bible Knowledge Commentary A30.

14. FORSAKEN CRY; PROPHECY (Psalm 22:1)

"My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken me? Far from my deliverance are the words of my groaning."

FORSAKEN CRY; FULFILLMENT (Matthew 27:46)

"And about the ninth hour Jesus cried out with a loud voice, saying, 'Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani?' that is, 'My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?'"

Table of Contents pg 1, 2, 3, 4

HEARTBROKEN, BONES NOT BROKEN, SIDE PIERCED; PROPHECY
(Psalm 22:14; 34:20, and Zechariah 12:10)
Psalm 22:14 — "I am poured out like water, and all my bones are out of joint; My heart is like wax; it is melted within me." (underline emphasis mine).

(Psalm 34:20) — "He keeps all his bones; not one of them is broken." (underline emphasis mine).

Zechariah 12:10 — "And I will pour out on the house of David and on the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the Spirit of grace and of supplication, so that they will look on Me whom they have pierced." (underline emphasis mine).

HEARTBROKEN, BONES NOT BROKEN, SIDE PIERCED; FULFILLMENT (John 19:32-34)

"The soldiers therefore came, and broke the legs of the first man, and of the other man who was crucified with Him; but coming to Jesus, when they saw that He was already dead, they did not break His legs; but one of the soldiers pierced His side with a spear, and immediately there came out blood and water."(underline emphasis mine)

From a medical perspective, concerning the blood and water: this indicates that Jesus either died of cardiac rupture or cardio respiratory failure.

16. DARKNESS OVER THE LAND; PROPHECY (Amos 8:9)

" 'And it will come about in that day,' declares the Lord GOD, 'That I shall make the sun go down at noon and make the earth dark in broad daylight.'"

DARKNESS OVER THE LAND; FULFILLMENT (Matthew 27:44-45)

"And the robbers also who had been crucified with Him were casting the same insult at Him. Now from the sixth hour darkness fell upon all the land until the ninth hour."

Because the Jews reckoned twelve hours from sunrise to sunset, it would make the sixth hour near noon and the ninth hour about three o'clock. Thallus, a historian, mentioned the darkness and the events surrounding the crucifixion around AD 52 His words are recorded by Julius Africanus. [A14, D1]

Table of Contents pg 1, 2, 3, 4

17. BURIED IN RICH MAN'S TOMB; PROPHECY (Isaiah 53:9)

"His grave was assigned with wicked men, yet He was with a rich man in His death, because He had done no violence, nor was there any deceit in His mouth."

BURIED IN RICH MAN'S TOMB; FULFILLMENT (Matthew 27:57-60)

"And when it was evening, there came a rich man from Arimathea, named Joseph, who himself had also become a disciple of Jesus. This man went to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus. Then Pilate ordered it to be given over to him. And Joseph took the body and wrapped it in a clean linen cloth, and laid it in his own new tomb."

BODILY RESURRECTION; PROPHECY (Psalm 16:10; see also Psalm 41:9-10)

"For Thou wilt not abandon my soul to Sheol; neither wilt Thou allow Thy Holy One to undergo decay."

BODILY RESURRECTION; FULFILLMENT (Acts 2:31 and John 2:19-22)
(see also Acts 13:34, Luke 24:46)

Acts 2:31 — "He looked ahead and spoke of the resurrection of the Christ, that He was neither abandoned to Hades, nor did His flesh suffer decay." (underline emphasis mine)

John 2:19-22 — "Jesus answered and said to them, 'Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up.' The Jews therefore said, 'It took forty-six years to build this temple, and will You raise it up in three days?' But He was speaking of the temple of His body. When therefore He was raised from the dead, His disciples remembered that He said this; and they believed the Scripture, and the word which Jesus had spoken." (underline emphasis mine)

Some people try to say that Jesus only rose from the grave spiritually, not physically — this is one of the proofs that this assumption is false. His body did not rot, because he physically rose from the dead. He said he would raise his body, and he did.

Professor Peter W Stoner and a group of college students decided to try and figure the mathematical odds of Jesus fulfilling just eight of the Old Testament prophecies. They took this figure and made a word picture we can all understand. Let's say you took the entire state of Texas and buried it two feet deep in silver dollars. Next you put an X on one of the silver dollars. Then, you mix them all up, using bulldozers. Now you send out a man blindfolded, and allow him to pick up one coin. The students determined that the blindfolded man picking up the coin with the X on it, would have the same odds as Jesus fulfilling the prophecies by chance. [A32]

Table of Contents pg 1, 2, 3, 4

You would certainly stand a better chance of winning the lottery a few times, than you would at winning a bet that Jesus was not the Messiah foretold in the Old Testament. Other people have made amazing predictions but they have also been wrong. The Bible, on the other hand, contains more predictions than any single individual, and it has never been wrong. Jesus declared that these Scriptures testified of Him (John 5:39). The prophecies concerning Jesus before His birth help in verifying this point.

Topic Index

Jesus is the only religious leader in history who predicted His own death and resurrection and then actually died and then rose from the dead. There is historical evidence to support that this is not just a story but a fact in history. The sermon Peter preached in Jerusalem about the resurrection in Acts 2:14-41 took place within a short walk of where Jesus was buried. Three thousand people accepted the Gospel message there. This would be rather hard to explain if the body of Jesus was still in the tomb (see Luke 24:18-24, 18:31-34). What motive would the disciples have to die martyrs for this Gospel message if they did not really see Jesus after He was raised from the dead? Why did the non-believers Paul and James change, and profess to have also seen the risen Christ, if it were not so? How does one explain more than 500 eyewitnesses (1 Corinthians 15:5-8)? It has been proven that the physical resurrection of Jesus Christ would stand in a court of law, based upon historical evidence. These facts are established by critical and historical procedures. It is not logical reasoning to reject the resurrection simply because one does not accept the inspiration of the scriptures.

Considering these credentials that Jesus has: (1) been foretold with detailed prophecy before He was born; (2) predicted His own death and physical resurrection; (3) bodily risen from the dead just as He said He would — I do not believe that there are any other religious leaders that deserve our attention more than Jesus Christ.

Table of Contents pg 1, 2, 3, 4

Topic Index

WHO DID JESUS CLAIM TO BE?

His enemies understood Him to claim to be God. John 10:30-33 says: " 'I and the Father are one.' The Jews took up stones again to stone Him. Jesus answered them, 'I showed you many good works from the Father; for which of them are you stoning Me?' The Jews answered Him, 'For a good work we do not stone You, but for blasphemy; and because You, being a man, make Yourself out to be God.'"

Here is Jesus' response in verses 36-39:" '..do you say of Him, whom the Father sanctified and sent into the world, 'You are blaspheming,' because I said, 'I am the Son of God'? If I do not do the works of My Father, do not believe Me; but if I do them, though you do not believe Me, believe the works, that you may know and understand that the Father is in Me, and I in the Father.' Therefore they were seeking again to seize Him, and He eluded their grasp."

(All underline emphasis mine)

Jesus declared that He and the Father are One. The Jews understood this as a claim to be God. **Jesus then calls Himself the "Son of God"** and reaffirms His statement of" I and the Father are one". The question that remains is, did the Jews correctly understand what He meant when He called himself the "Son of God"? Was He also claiming to be God? I believe the answer is "yes", He did claim to be God. We see this clearly in John 20:28-29: "Thomas answered and said to Him, **'My Lord and my God!**'Jesus said to him, 'Because you have seen Me, have you believed? Blessed are they who did not see, and yet believed.'"In these verses, Thomas calls Jesus his "Lord and God". Jesus, being the teacher that He was, would have rebuked or at least corrected Thomas, if Thomas had been incorrect to refer to Jesus with those words. Certainly Jesus would not have let such a misunderstanding, or use of the Lord's name in vain (as some have interpreted it), go by without some correction. Jesus' answer to Thomas shows that Thomas was correct to call Him "God and Lord".

Jesus not only claimed to be the "Son of God" and "God One with the Father", but He also claimed to be the expected Messiah as foretold in the Old Testament. John 4:25-26: "The woman said to Him, "I know that Messiah is coming (He who is called Christ); when that One comes, He will declare all things to us." Jesus said to her, "I who speak to you am He."

(underline emphasis mine)

Table of Contents pg 1, 2, 3, 4

Jesus often referred to himself as the Son of man. Matthew 17:22-23:"And while they were gathering together in Galilee, Jesus said to them, '**The Son of Man** is going to be delivered into the hands of men; and they will kill Him, and He will be raised on the third day.' And they were deeply grieved." It is interesting that Jesus would call Himself this, since he was not a "son of man" in the way we would assume. He was born of the Virgin Mary and by the Holy Spirit — Joseph was not his biological father. Jesus was, however, the Son of man in two other ways:

Jesus is the Son of Man as the Messiah, being born through the family of David, as well as through Jesse, Judah, Jacob, Isaac, and Abraham, as shown earlier. This genealogy traces him through man. Both Mary and Joseph's bloodlines can be traced through these people (Matthew 1:1-16, Luke 3:23-38). The title "Messiah" is also applied to Jesus because the Messiah that was to come in Old Testament prophecy was called the "Son of Man"(Daniel 7:13-14).

Jesus is also seen as the Son of Man in reference to His humanity — God becoming man

Philippians 2:5-8 says, "Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus, who, although He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant, and being made in the likeness of men. And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross." In the first chapter of John, verse one, we see: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God"; then, verse fourteen of the same chapter: "And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth."

(all underline emphasis mine)

Table of Contents pg 1, 2, 3, 4

Topic Index

HOW IMPORTANT IS IT TO ACCEPT JESUS' CLAIM OF WHO HE IS?

According to Jesus, it is very important

See John 8:24-25: "I said therefore to you, that 'you shall die in your sins'; **for unless you believe that I am He you shall die in your sins**. And so they were saying to Him, 'Who are You?' Jesus said to them, 'What have I been saying to you from the beginning?'"

(underline and bold emphasis mine)

As we have already seen, Jesus claimed to be the Messiah, God One with the Father, and the Son of God. He said that unless men accepted these things as His identity, they would die in their sins. What does it mean to die in your sins? It means to die and be separated from God. The Bible declares that those who are separated from God spend eternity in a place called Hell. Fortunately, Eternal Life in God's presence is a free gift. All you have to do to gain eternal life is accept Jesus as your Savior and substitutional sacrifice for your sins, and accept him as Lord of your life (Matthew 25:31-41, John 3:16-18, Romans 3:23, 1 John 1:10, James 2:10, Matthew 5:22, Ephesians 2:8-9, Luke 6:44-49).

Topic Index

WHO DOES THE BIBLE DECLARE JESUS TO BE?

The church usually answers this question by referring to the "Trinity". The Trinity is a title of a doctrine that the Bible teaches. Nelson's Illustrated Bible Dictionary defines the Trinity as follows:"The coexistence of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit in the unity of the Godhead (divine nature or essence). The doctrine of the trinity means that within the being and activity of the one God there are three distinct persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit." [C2]

Throughout the Bible we find that the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are all referred to as "God", and all three persons possess the attributes of God. We also find that there is only one God — not three Gods in one. All three are also seen as separate persons, even though they are one God. Jesus is God the Son, the second person in the Trinity. Although much could be written about the Trinity concept, I will be focusing on Jesus.

Table of Contents pg 1, 2, 3, 4

The Bible calls Jesus God

Isaiah 9:6:"For a child will be born to us, a son will be given to us; and the government will rest on His shoulders; and His name will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Eternal Father, Prince of Peace."

Acts 20:28: "Be on guard for yourselves and for all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood." (According to this verse the church was purchased with whose blood?)

Colossians 2:8-9: "See to it that no one takes you captive through philosophy and empty deception, according to the tradition of men, according to the elementary principles of the world, rather than according to Christ. For in Him all the fullness of Deity dwells in bodily form,"

I John 5:20:"And we know that the Son of God has come, and has given us understanding, in order that we might know Him who is true, and we are in Him who is true, in His Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God and eternal life."

2 Peter 1:1: "Simon Peter, a bond-servant and apostle of Jesus Christ, to those who have received a faith of the same kind as ours, by the righteousness of our God and Savior, Jesus Christ..."

Revelation 1:7-8: "Behold, He is coming with the clouds, and every eye will see Him, even those who pierced Him; and all the tribes of the earth will mourn over Him. Even so. Amen. 'I am the Alpha and the Omega,' says the Lord God,'who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty.'"

Compare this with Revelation 2:8 "And to the angel of the church in Smyrna write: The first and the last, who was dead, and has come to life..."

Hebrews 1:8: "But of the Son He says 'Thy throne, O God, is forever and ever, and the righteous scepter is the scepter of His kingdom.'"

Titus 2:13: "Looking for the blessed hope and the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Christ Jesus."

(All underline emphasis in above Scripture mine.)

Table of Contents pg 1, 2, 3, 4

Topic Index

DOES JESUS POSSESS THE ATTRIBUTES OF GOD?

We would expect God to be seen as Creator, Judge, Savior (able to forgive sins), omniscient (all knowing), omnipotent (all powerful), omnipresent (able to be everywhere at once), eternal (having always existed), and worshipped. As I will show, all of these things can be found in Jesus Christ. (All underline emphasis mine.)

Jesus is Creator: **Colossians 1:13-16:**

"For He delivered us from the domain of darkness, and transferred us to the kingdom of His beloved Son, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins. And He is the image of the invisible God, the first-born of all creation. For by Him all things were created, both in the heavens and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities-- all things have been created by Him and for Him."

(See also John 1:3, Hebrews 1:8-10, 1 Corinthians 8:6, Isaiah 44:24)

Jesus is Judge: **John 5:22:**

"For not even the Father judges anyone, but He has given all judgment to the Son..."

(See also 2 Timothy 4:1, Romans 14:10)

(He can forgive sins): Mark 2:5:
"And Jesus seeing their faith said to the paralytic, 'My son, your sins are forgiven.'"

We can forgive someone for sinning against us, but we cannot forgive someone for sinning against God, as Jesus did here. And in **Acts 5:30-31:** "The God of our fathers raised up Jesus, whom you had put to death by hanging Him on a cross. He is the one whom God exalted to His right hand as a Prince and a Savior, to grant repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins."

(See also Mark 2:10, Colossians 2:13)

Table of Contents pg 1, 2, 3, 4

Jesus is Omniscient (all knowing or all wise):

1 Corinthians 1:24:

"to those who are the called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God."

Jesus is shown in the New Testament to have knowledge far beyond our human understanding. We do not know the heart of every man but John 2:24-25 says Jesus knew all men and what was in man. In John 6:64 we are told Jesus knew from the beginning who they were who did not believe, and who it was that would betray Him. Then in John 13:1 we find that Jesus knew His hour had come to die and go to the Father. In John 16:30 the disciples said, "Now we know that You know all things". John 18:4 says that Jesus knew all the things that were about to happen to Him. While Jesus was on the cross we are told He knew the Old Testament prophecies concerning Himself and our redemption had been fulfilled. Nobody else knew that at that time, yet, He did (John 19:28). Peter declared that Jesus knew His heart and all things (John.21:17). What man has ever had this kind of knowledge? This knowledge is far beyond even any of the prophets in the Bible. They may have foretold future events but none of them knew the heart and thoughts of every man. These are only a few examples that could be shown that Jesus knew such things.

Jesus is Omnipotent (all powerful, unlimited authority): **Matthew 28:18:**

"And Jesus came up and spoke to them, saying, 'All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth.'"

In the following references we see that: Jesus will return with power; power flowed through Him to heal people who merely touched Him; Jesus had power over demons; He was able to give power to His disciples to heal others; Peter declared there was power in Jesus' name; Jesus is the power of God; it was through Jesus that Paul received power; Jesus has the power to subject everything unto Himself; it is by His power that we will be raised from the dead; He upholds all things by the word of His power; Jesus has the keys (i.e.. the power) over death and Hades; and that the time will come when Jesus will abolish all other rule, authority and power.

(See also Mark 13:26,5:30; Luke 4:36, 6:19, 9:1; Acts 4:7-10; Romans 1:4; 1 Corinthians 1:24, 15:23-25; 2 Corinthians 12:9; Philippians 3:20-21; Hebrews 1:3; 2 Peter 1:16; Revelation 1:17-18.)

Table of Contents pg 1, 2, 3, 4

Jesus is Omnipresent (present at all places at all times): **Matthew 18:20, 28:20:**

Jesus said, "For where two or three have gathered together in My name, there I am in their midst" (18:20). He also told His disciples, "and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age" (28:20). Paul declared that Jesus dwells in the hearts of believers. Paul further stated if this is not true of an individual they do not belong to Him (Romans 8:9).

(See also 2 Corinthians 13:5, Galatians 2:20, Ephesians 3:17, Colossians 1:27, Revelation 3:20.)

Jesus is eternal (He has always existed): **Micah 5:2:**

"But as for you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, too little to be among the clans of Judah, from you One will go forth for me to be ruler in Israel. His goings forth are from long ago, from the days of eternity."

(See also John 1:1-2, 17:5, 8:58; Revelations 1:17,2:8, 22:13.)

Jesus is worshipped: Hebrews 1:6:

"And when He again brings the first-born into the world, He says, 'And let all the angels of God worship Him.'"

Matthew 14:33:"And those who were in the boat worshipped Him, saying, 'You are certainly God's Son!'"

(See Matthew 4:10 for text regarding how worship belongs to God alone. See also Matthew 2:2 and 11. For "lamb on throne" references, see Revelations .4:10, 7:17; John 1:29-36)

Table of Contents pg 1, 2, 3, 4

Topic Index

THE TERM "SON OF GOD"

As I stated earlier, the term "Son of God" means different things to different people. I have tried to show who the Son of God is, but it is also important to recognize that everyone that uses this term is not speaking about the same thing. Following are three examples.

Historic Christianity — The teachings that can be traced back through the Protestant Reformation, the Catholic church, the Apostolic Fathers and the original church referred to as "The Way" in Acts 19:23. There are many Christian denominations and non-denominational churches that would fall into this category. It is these churches that teach the doctrine that is now called the Trinity. Historic Christianity teaches that the Son of God is: God the Son, the second person in the Trinity, God in human form.

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints — Also referred to as L.D.S., or the Mormons. To this church the Son of God is: The literal son of Elohim through a physical relation with Mary. He is also the brother of Lucifer and our elder brother. He is one of many Gods. This church believes that God the Father, God the Son, and the Holy Spirit, are three separate Gods. This can be verified in their books in the following locations: Religious Truths Defined pg.44,[E1] Mormon Doctrine pgs.546-547 [E6],Doctrines of SalvationVol.1 pg.102,[E2] Evidences and Reconciliations pg.209,[E3] Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith, Section Six 1843–44 pg.370 [E4],Discourses of Brigham Young, pg.22 [E5].

The Watchtower Society — These churches are known as Kingdom Halls, and the people are commonly referred to as "Jehovah Witnesses". This church believes that the Son of God is a mighty god, but not Jehovah, who is the only Almighty God. Jesus is a created being also known as Michael the Archangel. Watchtower doctrine teaches that Jesus should not be worshipped. This can be verified in their books in the following locations: Reasoning from the Scriptures pgs.213, 416-417[A19] , Aid to Bible Understanding pgs.918, 920, 1152,1241-1242[A20] .

If Jesus was the brother of Lucifer, who is a fallen angel, as the Mormon Church claims— or Michael the Archangel, as Jehovah Witnesses claim— in both cases this would make Him an angel. Angels are not to be worshipped (Colossians 2:18 and Luke 4:8). Jesus Himself created angels (Colossians 1:13-17). He cannot be the brother of His own creation, nor can He Himself be His own creation. Also, if He is a mighty god separate from Jehovah, as the Witnesses claim — or one of many Gods, as Mormons claim— He would have to be a false god. The Bible is very clear about the fact that there is only one God (Isaiah 44:6-8).

Table of Contents pg 1, 2, 3, 4

Topic Index

WHAT DID CHRISTIANS THINK IN THE 1ST CENTURY AFTER JESUS? DID THEY BELIEVE THE SAME AS WHAT CHRISTIANS TEACH TODAY ABOUT JESUS?

The Christians in the 1st century had a better understanding of what the writers of the New Testament actually meant. I say this because some of what are known as the "Ante-Nicene Fathers" personally knew the writers of the New Testament. For example, Ignatius was a personal disciple of one or more of the original apostles. (This can be found in the book A Dictionary of Early Christian Beliefs [A7].) Therefore it stands to reason that, if we are interpreting the New Testament correctly, our beliefs about who Jesus is should not have changed from what was believed about Jesus in the 1st century.

The following quotes (underline emphasis mine) can be found in The Ante-Nicene Fathers, Translations of the Writings of the Fathers down to AD 325

Ignatius was the head of the church of Antioch [died AD110].
Volume 1, The epistle of Ignatius to the Romans, chapter 3 **(Vol.1 PDF pg. 60)**

"For our God, Jesus Christ, now that He is with the Father, is all the more revealed in His glory. Christianity is not a thing of silence only, but also of manifest greatness."[D1]

Justin Martyr is recognized to be one of the most important Christian writers [AD110-166].

Volume 1, The first Apology of Justin, chapter 63 **(Vol.1 PDF pg. 150)**

"...the Father of the universe has a Son; who also, being the first-begotten Word of God, is even God. And of old He appeared in the shape of fire and in the likeness of an angel to Moses and to the other prophets; but now in the times of your reign, having, as we before said, become Man by a virgin, according to the counsel of the Father, for the salvation of those who believe on Him, He endured both to be set at nought and to suffer, that by dying and rising again He might conquer death. And that which was said out of the bush to Moses, "I am that I am, the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, and the God of your fathers,"[D1]

(See Exodus 3:1-6, Mark 12:18-31)

To find many more references of what the early church believed and wrote, I would recommend getting the book called A Dictionary of Early Christian Beliefs [A7] by David W. Bercot and a CD Rom titled Early Church Fathers Protestant Edition [D1] by Logos Research Systems to be able to read all references in the dictionary in full context (see http://www.logos.com).

Table of Contents pg 1, 2, 3, 4

This Bible study explains the Trinity and shows it in both the Old and New Testament as well as believed by the Early Church.

You can click on **"The Trinity"** to start reading at the beginning of this topic or use the topic index to jump to the part that interest you most.

Overview of content in this section is as follows:

The Trinity (pg. 29)

Topic Index

Overview of content in this section is as follows:

The Trinity defined (pg. 29)
The Father is called God **(pg. 29)**
Jesus is called God (pg. 29)
The Holy Spirit is called God **(pg. 29)**

The Holy Spirit speaking in New Testament is God speaking in Old Testament (pg. 30)

Father, Son & Holy Spirit are all separate (pg. 31)

There is only one God (pg. 31)
The Father is creator (pg. 32)
Jesus is creator (pg. 32)
The Spirit is creator (pg. 32)
There is only one creator (pg. 32)

More plurality in the singular God **(pg. 33)**
The whole Trinity in one passage in the Old Testament (pg. 33)

Unity in the New Testament (pg. 34)
Trinity hard to understand does not make it untrue **(pg. 34)**
Comparing what they have in common **(pg. 35)**

What about accusations that the Trinity is a doctrine derived from the 3rd or 4th century? (Jehovah Witness doctrine) (pg. 37)

What about the idea that there is three separate God's that make up the Godhead as taught by Mormonism? (No other God's) (pg. 39)

Table of Contents pg 1, 2, 3, 4

THE TRINITY

Historically the nature of God has been referred to as the Trinity. This means that the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit are three separate persons which constitute only one God. The word *"Trinity"* is not in the Bible. This simply is the name of a doctrine or idea that is taught in the Bible. Often people who do not believe the doctrine of the Trinity define the word incorrectly. Then they set out to prove that the false definition is un-biblical, which of course it is — because they incorrectly defined it. Let me try to explain the doctrine of the "Trinity" as clearly as I can:

> **God the Father is called "God",** but this does not mean that He is Jesus, nor does it mean that He is the Holy Spirit. The Father is called "God" in Romans 1:7 (underline emphasis mine):*"to all who are beloved of God in Rome, called as saints: Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ".*
>
> **Jesus the Son is called "God",** but this does not mean that He is the Father nor does it mean He is the Holy Spirit. Jesus is called "God" in John 1:1 and 14 (underline emphasis mine):*(1) In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.(14) And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth.* (Notice this states that God became flesh. In the context this is Jesus. See also Philippians 2:5-8) Jesus is also called "God" in John 20:27-29 (underline emphasis mine): "*Then He said to Thomas, 'Reach here your finger, and see My hands; and reach here your hand, and put it into My side; and be not unbelieving, but believing.' Thomas answered and said to Him, 'My Lord and my God!' Jesus said to him, 'Because you have seen Me, have you believed? Blessed are they who did not see, and yet believed.*'" (Notice that Jesus did not rebuke Peter when he called him Lord and God. The conclusion is that Jesus is God the Son.)
>
> **The Holy Spirit is called "God",** but this does not mean that He is the Father nor does it mean that He is Jesus. The Holy Spirit is called God in Acts 5:3-4 (underline emphasis mine): "*But Peter said, 'Ananias, why has Satan filled your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit, and to keep back some of the price of the land? While it remained unsold, did it not remain your own? And after it was sold, was it not under your control? Why is it that you have conceived this deed in your heart? You have not lied to men, but to God.'"*(Notice Peter stated that Ananias lied to the Holy Spirit; then in the next breath, he states that this was "God" Ananias lied to.)

Table of Contents pg 1, 2, 3, 4

Topic Index

The Holy Spirit speaking in New Testament is God speaking in Old Testament

Consider also Hebrews 3:7-11 (underline and bold emphasis mine): “Therefore, just as the **Holy Spirit says**, ‘Today if you hear His voice, Do not harden your hearts as when they provoked **Me**, as in the day of trial in the wilderness, Where your fathers tried me by testing me, and saw My works for forty years. Therefore **I** was angry with this generation, and said, 'They always go astray in their heart; and they did not know **My** ways'; As I swore in My wrath, 'they shall not enter My rest.'"

(Notice we are told that the Holy Spirit is the one who says He was provoked and swore in His wrath "they shall not enter my rest".)

Psalms 95:6-11 (underline and bold emphasis mine) says,“Come, let us worship and bow down; let us kneel before **the LORD our maker. For He is our God**, and we are the people of His pasture, and the sheep of His hand. Today, if you would hear His voice, Do not harden your hearts, as at Meribah, as in the day of Massah in the wilderness; When your fathers tested **me**, they tried **me**, though they had seen **My** work. For forty years **I** loathed that generation, and said they are a people who err in their heart, and they do not know **My** ways. Therefore **I** swore in **My** anger, truly they shall not enter into **My** rest."

Here we are told that our Lord our maker is God. It is He that was provoked and swore in His wrath "they shall not enter into my rest". The conclusion is God the Holy Spirit said this(see also Numbers 14:22-23) For a similar reference where we have God speaking in the Old Testament and in the New Testament it refers to the Holy Spirit as the speaker, compare Isaiah 6:8-10 with Acts 28:25-27.

We have just seen that the Father, Jesus the Son and the Holy Spirit are all called “God”.

Table of Contents pg 1, 2, 3, 4

Topic Index

Father, Son & Holy Spirit are all separate

These three are all called God, yet they are also three separate persons. They are not all the same person. One passage that clearly shows this is John 14:16-17 (underline emphasis mine) (Jesus is the one speaking here):*"And I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may be with you forever; that is the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it does not behold Him or know Him, but you know Him because He abides with you, and will be in you".* This passage clearly shows they are three separate persons — Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

All three — the Father, Son, and the Holy Spirit — are called God, and they are three separate persons. Yet the Bible does not teach that there are three Gods. There is only one God. These three Persons constitute only one God.

Topic Index

THERE IS ONLY ONE GOD

Isaiah 44:6-8 (underline emphasis mine): "Thus says the LORD, the King of Israel and his Redeemer, the LORD of hosts: 'I am the first and I am the last, and there is no God besides me. And who is like me? Let him proclaim and declare it; yes, let him recount it to me in order, from the time that I established the ancient nation. And let them declare to them the things that are coming and the events that are going to take place. Do not tremble and do not be afraid; have I not long since announced it to you and declared it? And you are My witnesses. Is there any God besides me, or is there any other Rock? I know of none.'"

Did you notice King of Israel and his Redeemer seem to be speaking of more than one? Then He says, "I am the first and I am the last and there is no God besides Me". This is a singular statement. Then He asks if there are any other Gods besides Him, and states that He (God) does not know of any! How can there be other Gods that even God himself knows nothing about?

Isaiah 43:10: "'You are My witnesses,'" declares the LORD, 'And My servant whom I have chosen, in order that you may know and believe me, and understand that I am He. Before me there was no God formed, and there will be none after me.'".(This even states there will be no other Gods in the future!)

So what we have so far is the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit: three separate persons. All three persons are referred to as" God", and there is only one God. We find this in creation also. All three are called the "creator", and there is only one creator.

Table of Contents pg 1, 2, 3, 4

Topic Index

THE FATHER IS THE CREATOR

Isaiah 45:18 (underline emphasis mine): "For thus says the LORD, who created the heavens (He is the God who formed the earth and made it, He established it and did not create it a waste place, but formed it to be inhabited), 'I am the LORD, and there is none else'"
(See also Isaiah 42:5 and 1 Cointhians.8:6).

Topic Index

JESUS IS CREATOR

Colossians 1:13-16:"For He delivered us from the domain of darkness, and transferred us to the kingdom of His beloved Son, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins. And He is the image of the invisible God, the first-born of all creation. For by Him all things were created, both in the heavens and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities-- all things have been created by Him and for Him"
(See also John 1:3, Hebrews 1:2, 1 Corinthians 8:6).

Topic Index

THE SPIRIT IS CREATOR

Job 26:13: "By His spirit He hath garnished the heavens; His hand hath formed the crooked serpent."

Genesis 1:2:"And the earth was formless and void, and darkness was over the surface of the deep; and the Spirit of God was moving over the surface of the waters" (see also Psalms 104:30).

Topic Index

GOD CREATED BY HIMSELF

Isaiah 44:24 (underline emphasis mine):"Thus says the LORD, your Redeemer, and the One who formed you from the womb, 'I, the LORD, am the maker of all things, stretching out the heavens by myself, and spreading out the earth all alone.'"He could not say he created "by myself" and "all alone" if the Father, Son,and Holy Spirit were three separate Gods. To some people these verses would seem to be in conflict with each other. They are not however in conflict at all — the answer is these three persons constitute only one God.

Deuteronomy 6:4 (underline emphasis mine): "Hear, O Israel! The LORD is our God, the LORD is one!"

Table of Contents pg 1, 2, 3, 4

Topic Index

We find further plurality in the one God in the Old Testament. For example, see Genesis 1:26-27 (underline emphasis mine):"Then God said, 'Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; and let them rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky and over the cattle and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.' And God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them."

Notice that "Us" and "Our" are plural, while "His" and "He" are singular. My point again is the plurality in the one God. There are not three Gods, but rather three persons in the one God.

Topic Index

THE ENTIRE TRINITY REPRESENTED IN ONE PASSAGE IN THE OLD TESTAMENT

> Consider Isaiah 48:12-16 (underline emphasis mine):
> 12) "Listen to me, O Jacob, even Israel whom I called; I am He, I am the first, I am also the last.
> 13) Surely My hand founded the earth, and My right hand spread out the heavens; when I call to them, they stand together.
> 14) Assemble, all of you, and listen! Who among them has declared these things? The LORD loves him; he shall carry out His good pleasure on Babylon, and His arm shall be against the Chaldeans.
> 15) I, even I, have spoken; indeed I have called him, I have brought him, and He will make his ways successful.
> 16) Come near to me, listen to this: from the first I have not spoken in secret, from the time it took place, I was there. And now the Lord GOD has sent me, and His Spirit."

Notice that in verse 12 God is the speaker, the one who has called Israel. He states, " I am He, I am the first, I am also the last" "I" and "He" are singular. Follow the context down and you will see that the speaker who is God and identifies himself as " I am He, I am the first, I am also the last", is also the same one speaking in verse 16. The context does not change speakers. Then this single person (God) speaking says "And now the Lord GOD has sent me, and His Spirit." In this text God is speaking, but says,'the Lord God has sent me'. Not only has He sent Him, but He also says, "**and** His Spirit". What we have here is three separate persons in a singular God.

Table of Contents pg 1, 2, 3, 4

Topic Index

We find unity in the New Testament in the Trinity as well. See Matthew 3:16-17:"And after being baptized, Jesus went up immediately from the water; and behold, the heavens were opened, and He saw the Spirit of God descending as a dove, and coming upon Him, and behold, a voice out of the heavens, saying, 'This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well-pleased.'" Then, in Matthew 28:19: "Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit." In these passages we can see all three —, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit — are separate and also in unity.

We can see the Trinity in the birth of Christ as well (Matthew 1:20): "But when he had considered this, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, 'Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife; for that which has been conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit.'" (Underline emphasis mine.)

That which was conceived in Mary was "of the Holy Spirit" — Jesus is not called the "Son of the Holy Spirit", Jesus is called the "Son of God". Here again we have all three members of the Trinity represented. Jesus refers to God the Father as His Father, yet that which was conceived in Mary was of the Holy Spirit.

Topic Index

Some people say the Trinity is hard to understand; this lack of understanding makes belief impossible for some. Yet, whether or not the concept of the Trinity is hard to understand is not the point. The point is, does the Bible teach the Trinity? We have seen that the Bible does teach the Trinity. Should it surprise us that God is somewhat complex? I do not fully understand the law of gravity, but I know if I step off a cliff I will fall — even if I do not understand or "believe" in the law of gravity. The Bible teaches that there are three separate persons that constitute only one God — therefore I believe it.

Table of Contents pg 1, 2, 3, 4

Topic Index

Comparing more of what they have in common

Following are some Biblical comparisons which sometimes cause people who have not yet grasped the teaching of Trinity to see Scriptural conflicts. First, we will see that both the Father and Jesus are called the first and the last. How many "first" and "last" ("Alpha" and "Omega") can there be? The obvious answer —that there can be only one beginning and one end —There is only one God (Isaiah 44:8).

GOD THE FATHER AS FIRST AND LAST

Isaiah 41:4 (all underline emphasis mine): "Who has performed and accomplished it, calling forth the generations from the beginning?'I, the LORD, am the first, and with the last. I am He.'"

Isaiah 44:6: "Thus says the LORD, the King of Israel and his Redeemer, the LORD of hosts: 'I am the first and I am the last, and there is no God besides me.'"

Isaiah 48:12: "Listen to me, O Jacob, even Israel whom I called; I am He, I am the first, I am also the last."

JESUS THE SON AS ALPHA AND OMEGA

Revelation 1:7-8 (all underline emphasis mine):"Behold, He is coming with the clouds, and every eye will see Him, even those who pierced Him; and all the tribes of the earth will mourn over Him. So it is to be. Amen. 'I am the Alpha and the Omega,' says the Lord God, 'who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty.'"

(Jesus is the one coming with the clouds; see Matthew 24:30, 26:64; Mark 13:26, 14:62;
1 Thesselonians.4:17.)

Revelation 1:17-18: "And when I saw Him, I fell at His feet as a dead man. And He laid His right hand upon me, saying, 'Do not be afraid; I am the first and the last, and the living One; and I was dead, and behold, I am alive forevermore, and I have the keys of death and of Hades.'"

Revelation 22:13-16: "I am the Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end. Blessed are those who wash their robes, that they may have the right to the tree of life, and may enter by the gates into the city. Outside are the dogs and the sorcerers and the immoral persons and the murderers and the idolaters, and everyone who loves and practices lying. I, Jesus, have sent My angel to testify to you these things for the churches. I am the root and the offspring of David, the bright morning star."

Table of Contents pg 1, 2, 3, 4

Next we will see that your body is a temple of God, your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit, and it is Christ that dwells in you. How can this be? ANSWER: These three persons make only one God.

YOUR BODY IS A TEMPLE OF GOD

2 Corinthians 6:16 (all underline emphasis mine):"Or what agreement has the temple of God with idols? For we are the temple of the living God; just as God said, 'I will dwell in them and walk among them; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people.'"

1 Corinthians 3:16:"Do you not know that you are a temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwells in you?"

YOUR BODY IS A TEMPLE OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

1 Corinthians 6:19-20 (all underline emphasis mine): "Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and that you are not your own? For you have been bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body." (Jesus\God paid the price, Acts 20:28.)

CHRIST DWELLS IN YOU

Galatians 2:20 (underline emphasis mine): "I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, Who loved me, and delivered Himself up for me."

SHARED GLORY

Next we will see that God will not give His glory to another. Yet Jesus shared this glory with Him (God). How can this be? ANSWER: They are One God.

Isaiah 42:8 (all underline emphasis mine): "I am the LORD, that is My name; I will not give My glory to another, nor My praise to graven images..."

John 17:5: "And now, glorify Thou Me together with Thyself, Father, with the glory which I had with Thee before the world was."

Table of Contents pg 1, 2, 3, 4

THE RESURRECTION

Who raised Jesus from the dead? The answer is God the Father, Jesus, and the Holy Spirit all raised Jesus from the dead.

1 Corinthians 6:14 (all underline emphasis mine):"Now God has not only raised the Lord, but will also raise us up through His power." (See also Acts 2:24, Acts 13:30, Romans 6:4.)

John 2:19-21:"Jesus answered and said to them, 'Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up.' The Jews therefore said, 'It took forty-six years to build this temple, and will You raise it up in three days?' But He was speaking of the temple of His body."
(See also John 10:17-18.)

Romans 8:11:"But if the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who indwells you." (See also 1 Peter 3:18.)

Topic Index

What about accusations that the Trinity is a doctrine derived from the 3rd or 4th century?

One well-known organization that teaches this misconception is the Watchtower Organization, commonly referred to as the Jehovah Witnesses. It is easy to show that the doctrine known as the Trinity was not derived from the 3rd or 4th century. To do this we will simply quote someone who lived before that time period.

Tertullian was a Christian theologian who lived 155-220 AD. The following quote by him can be found in Roberts, Alexander and Donaldson, James, *Ante-Nicene Fathers: Volume III, Tertullian Against Praxeas,* chapter 25 (all underline and bold emphasis mine):

"What follows Philip's question, and the Lord's whole treatment of it, to the end of John's Gospel, continues to furnish us with statements of the same kind, distinguishing the Father and the Son, with the properties of each. Then there is the Paraclete or Comforter, also, which He promises to pray for to the Father, and to send from heaven after He had ascended to the Father. He is called 'another Comforter', indeed; but in what way He is another we have already shown, 'He shall receive of mine', says Christ, just as Christ Himself received of the Father's. **Thus the connection of the Father in the Son, and of the Son in the Paraclete, produces three coherent Persons, who are yet distinct One from Another. These Three are one essence,** not one Person, as it is said, 'I and my Father are One', in respect of unity of substance, not singularity of number."[D1] **(Vol. 3 PDF pg. 1133-1134)**

Table of Contents pg 1, 2, 3, 4

The following definition of **"Paraclete"** is by *Webster's Collegiate Dictionary10th Edition* (see Bibliography):
Par.a.clete n [ME Paraclyte, fr. LL Paracletus, Paraclitus, fr. Gk Parakletos, lit., advocate, intercessor, fr. parakalein to invoke, fr. para- + kalein to call--more at low] (15c): ***holy spirit*** [A13]

Tertullian here is referring to John 14:9-16 where Jesus said He would ask of the Father and He would send the Holy Spirit, also referred to as "another Comforter" in the King James Version of the Bible. We see in this text that Tertullian referred to the Paraclete as the Holy Spirit. Notice he stated that the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit were three persons that were distinct from one another. He further stated that these three persons were one in essence. Tertullian just defined the Trinity; and remember, he lived 155-220 AD.

Compare what Tertullian said to the following from *Nelson's Illustrated Bible Dictionary*

"TRINITY: The coexistence of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit in the unity of the Godhead **(divine nature or essence).** The doctrine of the trinity means that within the being and activity of the one God there are three distinct persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit." [C2]

We can go back even earlier than this. Ignatius was a disciple of the Apostle John who wrote the Gospel of John; 1, 2, and 3 John; and the book of Revelation in the New Testament. Ignatius had the distinct advantage that he could actually ask John questions, to clarify what he meant in his writings. We find that Ignatius also taught the Trinity (and the Apostle John personally taught Ignatius).

From *Ante-Nicene Fathers: Volume I, The Epistle of Ignatius to the Philippians,* Chapter I — "Reason for Writing the Epistle"(see Bibliography for complete reference)
(all underline emphasis mine):

> "BEING mindful of your love and of your zeal in Christ, which ye have manifested towards us, we thought it fitting to write to you, who display such a godly and spiritual love to the brethren, to put you in remembrance of your Christian course, 'that ye all speak the same thing, being of one mind, thinking the same thing, and walking by the same rule of faith,' as Paul admonished you. For if there is one God of the universe, the Father of Christ, 'of whom are all things;' and one Lord Jesus Christ, our [Lord], 'by whom are all things;' and also one Holy Spirit, who wrought in Moses, and in the prophets and apostles; and also one baptism, which is administered that we should have fellowship with the death of the Lord; and also one elect Church; there ought likewise to be but one faith in respect to Christ. For 'there is one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all, who is through all, and in all.'"

Table of Contents pg 1, 2, 3, 4

Chapter II.— "Unity of the Three Divine Persons":

> "There is then one God and Father, and not two or three; One who is; and there is no other besides Him, the only true [God]. For 'the Lord thy God,' saith [the Scripture], 'is one Lord.' And again, 'Hath not one God created us? Have we not all one Father?' And there is also one Son, God the Word. For 'the only-begotten Son,' saith [the Scripture], 'who is in the bosom of the Father.' And again, 'One Lord Jesus Christ.' And in another place, 'What is His name, or what His Son's name, that we may know?' And there is also one Paraclete. For 'there is also,' saith [the Scripture], 'one Spirit,' since 'we have been called in one hope of our calling.' And again, 'We have drunk of one Spirit,' with what follows. And it is manifest that all these gifts [possessed by believers] 'worketh one and the self-same Spirit.' There are not then either three Fathers, or three Sons, or three Paracletes, but one Father, and one Son, and one Paraclete.' Wherefore also the Lord, when He sent forth the apostles to make disciples of all nations, commanded them to 'baptize in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost,' not unto one [person] having three names, nor into three [persons] who became incarnate, but into three possessed of equal honour." D1 **(Vol. 1 PDF pg. 98)**

Some cults, such as the Mormons, will take verses out of context to try and show there is more than one God. Jehovah Witnesses and others will also try to argue against the Trinity. Not only is the Trinity a Biblical doctrine, it is the historical teaching of the church

Topic Index Mormonism Index Jehovah Witness Index

NO OTHER GODS

Mormons try to use the Bible to support the belief in more than one God, as well as the idea that man can become a God.

Mormons teach that there are three separate God's that make up the godhead that we call the Trinity. Therefore I included this section as well to show there are no other Gods. This section will focus on some text Mormons use as proof text to show there are other gods as well as the Christian response against this false teaching.

Genesis 3:5

> "For God knows that in the day you eat from it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil."

The speaker here is Satan; this is what he said to Eve, when he was tempting her to eat what God had already expressly forbidden. The following verse shows what Jesus said about Satan, and should explain why I do not consider Satan's words a credible source upon which to build a doctrine.

Table of Contents pg 1, 2, 3, 4

John 8:44

> "You are of your father the devil, and you want to do the desires of your father. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. Whenever he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own nature; for he is a liar, and the father of lies."

Corinthians 8:1-6

> "1) **Now concerning things sacrificed to idols**, we know that we all have knowledge. Knowledge makes arrogant, but love edifies. 2) If anyone supposes that he knows anything, he has not yet known as he ought to know; 3) but if anyone loves God, he is known by Him. 4) Therefore concerning the eating of things sacrificed to idols, we know that there is no such thing as an idol in the world, and that **there is no God but one**. 5) For even if there are **so-called gods** whether in heaven or on earth, as indeed there are many gods and many lords, 6) yet for us there is but one God, the Father, from whom are all things, and we exist for Him; and one Lord, Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we exist through Him."

Most Mormons I have talked to start reading this text right in the middle of verse 5. The context of this entire chapter concerns eating food that has been sacrificed to idols, as you can see in verse 1 here. In verse 4, Paul said there is no God but one. Then he goes on to talk about the idols, and calls them "so-called gods", in verse 5, because the people considered these idols gods. When Paul said there are many gods and many lords, he is still talking about the idols. There indeed were many idols that people considered a "god", or a "lord". But they were only idols, which amounts to nothing. There are many false gods today; "false" being the operative word. Paul says for us, there is but one God, the Father, and one Lord, Jesus Christ, because the Christian is not supposed to have anything to do with idols.

Satan is also called "god of this world" in 2 Corinthians 4:4, but he is no real God at all. He does not have any of God's attributes. He cannot create, nor does he possess the knowledge or power that God does. Satan's title in this respect shows his authority or rule over this planet. He is even worshipped as God by some, but he is a false god who will end in the lake of fire (Revelation 20:10).

Table of Contents pg 1, 2, 3, 4

DOES JOHN 10 SHOW THAT THERE ARE OTHER GODS?

John 10:29-39

> " 29) 'My Father, who has given them to Me, is greater than all; and no one is able to snatch them out of the Father's hand. 30) I and the Father are one.' 31) The Jews took up stones again to stone Him. 32) Jesus answered them, 'I showed you many good works from the Father; for which of them are you stoning Me?' 33) The Jews answered Him, 'For a good work we do not stone You, but for blasphemy; and because You, being a man, make Yourself out to be God.' 34) Jesus answered them. 'Has it not been written in your Law, "I said, you are gods"? 35) If he called them gods, to whom the word of God came (and the Scripture cannot be broken), 36) do you say of Him, whom the Father sanctified and sent into the world, "You are blaspheming", because I said, "I am the Son of God"? 37) If I do not do the works of My Father, do not believe Me; 38) but if I do them, though you do not believe Me, believe the works, that you may know and understand that the Father is in Me, and I in the Father.' 39) Therefore they were seeking again to seize Him, and He eluded their grasp."

This text shows that Jesus claimed to be God in verse 30 by saying, "I and the Father are one". Verse 33 shows that this is how his enemies also interpreted His statement. Jesus then used Psalm 82:6 for his own defense. Let's look at that passage.

Psalm 82:1-8 (NAS)

1) "God takes His stand in His own congregation; He judges in the midst of the rulers. 2) How long will you judge unjustly, and show partiality to the wicked? Selah. 3) Vindicate the weak and fatherless; do justice to the afflicted and destitute. 4) Recue the weak and needy; deliver them out of the hand of the wicked. 5) They do not know nor do they understand; they walk about in darkness; all the foundations of the earth are shaken. 6) I said, 'You are the gods, and all of you are the sons of the Most High. 7) Nevertheless you will die like men, and fall like any one of the princes.' 8) Arise, O God, judge the earth! For it is Thou who dost possess all the nations."

Table of Contents pg 1, 2, 3, 4

In the text that Jesus quoted from, we see that these men who were given the title of "gods" were, in fact, unjust judges. The title of "gods" was referring to their positions of authority as judges. See that in verse 1, God judges in the midst of the rulers. Who are these rulers? They are the ones who are judging unjustly (verse 2). They are then exhorted to act, as they should in their positions of authority (verses 3-5). These judges are reminded that they are called "gods". Also they are sons of the Most High. We see in verse 7 that in spite of this position, they will die like men. Does this text sound like it is speaking of actual Gods, or judges? Not only does the context speak of actual judges, but also the Hebrew word that is translated as "gods" here is also translated as "judges" in Exodus 21:6 and 22:8-9.

The word "judges" below is the same Hebrew word translated as "gods" in Psalm 82:6.You can verify this using the back of the *Strong's Concordance*.

Exodus 22:8

> "If the thief is not caught, then the owner of the house shall appear before the **judges**, to determine whether he laid his hands on his neighbor's property."

Following are two different definitions of this Hebrew word.

Strong's

> "430 'elohiym (el-o-heem');
> plural of 433; gods in the ordinary sense; but specifically used (in the plural thus, especially with the article) of the supreme God; occasionally applied by way of deference to magistrates; and sometimes as a superlative:
> KJV-- angels, X exceeding, God (gods)- dess, -ly), X (very) great, judges, X mighty."

Brown-Driver-Briggs'

> "430 'elohiym-
> (plural) (a) rulers, judges (b) divine ones (c) angels (d) gods
> (plural intensive -singular meaning) (a) God, a god, a goddess (b) god-like one works or special possessions of God (d) the one true God (e) God"

Thus, the context of the 82nd Psalm is not only speaking of unjust judges, but the Hebrew word is sometimes translated as "judges". These are merely men, not literal Gods.

Table of Contents pg 1, 2, 3, 4

Now back to our original text in John 10. Jesus claimed to be God by saying, "I and the Father are one" in verse 30. Even His enemies understood what He meant (verse 33). The Jews said they were going to stone Jesus because He, being a man, made Himself out to be God. Jesus then used the 82nd Psalm in His own defense. Jesus using this passage reminded His opponents that even mere men who were judges have been called gods in Scripture Certainly then; He who really was God had a right to the title. Jesus said they did not believe that He and the Father were one (i.e. God) by His own words. So He challenged them to consider the works that He did, in order that they might know that "the Father is in me and I in the Father". The Jews understood this again as a claim to be God; that is why they tried to seize Him (verse 39).

While the *Book of Mormon* is not the word of God, still I find it interesting that according to it, there are no other Gods.

Alma 11:21-29

> " 21) And this Zeezrom began to question Amulek, saying: Will ye answer me a few questions which I shall ask you? Now Zeezrom was a man who was expert in the devices of the devil, that he might destroy that which was good; therefore, he said unto Amulek: Will ye answer the questions which I shall put unto you? 22) And Amulek said unto him: Yea, if it be according to the Spirit of the Lord, which is in me' for I shall say nothing which is contrary to the Spirit of the Lord. And Zeezrom said unto him: Behold, here are six onties of silver, and all these I will give thee if thou will deny the existence of a Supreme Being. 23) Now Amulek said: O thou child of hell, why tempt ye me? Knowest thou that the righteous yieldeth to no such temptations? 24) Believiest thou that there is no God? I say unto you, Nay, thou knowest that there is a God, but thou lovest that lucre more than him. 25) And now thou has lied before God unto me. Thou sadist unto me – Behold these six onties, which are of great worth, I will give unto thee – when thou hadst it in thy heart to retain them from me; and it was only thy desire that I should deny the true and living God, that thou mightiest have cause to destroy me. And now behold, for this great evil thou shalt have thy reward. 26) And Zeezrom said unto him: Thou sayest there is a true and living God? 27) And Amulek said: Yea, there is a true and living God. 28) Now Zeezrom said: Is there more than one God? 29) And he answered, No."

Table of Contents pg 1, 2, 3, 4

Topic Index

HOW IS IT THAT GOD IS NOT AWARE OF ANY OTHER GODS, IF IN FACT THEY EXIST?

Isaiah 44:8

> "'Do not tremble and do not be afraid; have I not long since announced it to you and declared it? And you are My witnesses. Is there any God besides me, or is there any other Rock? I know of none.'"

How can one become a "God", as the L.D.S. church teaches, if there was no God formed before Him and there will never be a God formed after Him?

Isaiah 43:10

> " 'You are My witnesses'," declares the LORD, 'And My servant whom I have chosen, in order that you may know and believe me, and understand that I am He. Before me there was no God formed, and there will be none after me.'"

Deuteronomy 4:35

> "To you it was shown that you might know that the LORD, He is God; there is no other besides Him."

Deuteronomy 4:39

> "Know therefore today, and take it to your heart, that the LORD, He is God in heaven above and on the earth below; there is no other."

Deuteronomy 32:39

> "See now that I, I am He, and there is no god besides me; it is I who put to death and give life. I have wounded, and it is I who heal; and there is no one who can deliver from My hand."

Samuel 2:2

> "There is no one holy like the LORD, indeed, there is no one besides Thee, nor is there any rock like our God."

Samuel 22:32

> "For who is God, besides the LORD? And who is a rock, besides our God?"

Table of Contents pg 1, 2, 3, 4

Isaiah 44:6

> "Thus says the LORD, the King of Israel and his Redeemer, the LORD of hosts: `I am the first and I am the last, and there is no God besides me.'"

Isaiah 45:5-6

> "I am the LORD, and there is no other; besides me there is no God. I will gird you, though you have not known me; That men may know from the rising to the setting of the sun that there is no one besides me. I am the LORD, and there is no other"

Isaiah 45:14

> "Thus says the LORD, 'The products of Egypt and the merchandise of Cush And the Sabeans, men of stature, will come over to you and will be yours; they will walk behind you, they will come over in chains and will bow down to you; they will make supplication to you: Surely, God is with you, and there is none else, no other God.'"

Isaiah 45:21

> "Declare and set forth your case; indeed, let them consult together. Who has announced this from of old? Who has long since declared it? Is it not I, the LORD? And there is no other God besides me, a righteous God and a Savior; there is none except me."

Isaiah 46:9

> "Remember the former things long past, for I am God, and there is no other; I am God, and there is no one like me,"

Psalm 18:31

> "For who is God, but the LORD? And who is a rock, except our God,"

Nehemiah 9:6

> "Thou alone art the LORD. Thou hast made the heavens, the heaven of heavens with all their host, the earth and all that is on it, the seas and all that is in them. Thou dost give life to all of them and the heavenly host bows down before Thee."

James 2:19

> "Thou believest that there is one God; thou doest well: the devils also believe, and tremble." (KJV)

Table of Contents pg 1, 2, 3, 4

Psalm 96:5

> "For all the gods of the peoples are idols, but the LORD made the heavens."

The Mormon "First Article of Faith" (believing that the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit are three separate Gods) falls apart if there is only one God!

The Bible is very clear that there is only one God not three God's

As far as the Jehovah Witness this also shows that their idea of Jesus being a mighty god while Jehovah is the only Almighty God is false. All other gods are false gods and not really god at all.

Mormonism Index Jehovah Witness Index

Topic Index

Table of Contents pg 1, 2, 3, 4

Christians talk about being saved. What does it mean to be saved? Saved from what? Do all good people go to heaven? What is Grace VS Works? This Bible study on Salvation is to answer these questions.

You can click on "What does it mean to be Saved?" to start reading at the beginning of this topic or use the topic index to jump to the part that interest you most.

Topic Index

Overview of content in this section is as follows:

What does it mean to be saved? (pg. 48)
Grace VS Works (pg. 52)

WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE SAVED?
Simplicity of the gospel (pg. 48)
Definition of saved & salvation (pg. 48)
Saved from wrath (pg, 48)
A loving God yet a God of Justice (pg. 49)
Will all good people go to heaven? (pg. 49)
God is the standard of good (pg. 50)
The rest of the gospel message (pg. 50)
Born Again (pg. 51)
Defining Repentance (pg. 51)

GRACE VERSES WORKS (pg. 52) Moronism Index Jehovah Witness Index
Grace defined (pg. 52)
Works defined (pg. 53)
Explaining the issue of being saved by grace alone (pg. 53)
Salvation is a gift (pg. 53)
There are those that try to abuse grace (pg. 54)
Doers of the word (pg. 55)
Those that quote James and say we are saved by works (pg. 56)

Some have said we are saved by faith to begin with when we first accept the Lord. Then after this point we are justified by our actions. (pg. 57)

Work out your own salvation (pg. 57)
Other related scripture (pg. 57)
The early church taught salvation by grace (pg. 57)

Table of Contents pg 1, 2, 3, 4

WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE SAVED?

Acts 16:30-31: "the jailer said, 'Sirs, what must I do to be saved?' And they said, 'Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you shall be saved, you and your household.'"

When the jailer asked Paul and Silas what he had to do to be saved, the answer was short and sweet. All the jailer and his household had to do was believe in the Lord Jesus Christ. This passage in the book of Acts tells us they did explain more to him and his household. The text also tells us the jailer and his household did believe. Although I will dig into this a little deeper, **I want you to recognize the simplicity of the Gospel.** You do not have to be a theologian to go to heaven. You only need Jesus Christ. *Acts 4:12: "And there is salvation in no one else; for there is no other name under heaven that has been given among men, by which we must be saved."*

I believe a good place to start this discussion is to see what the words "saved" and "salvation" actually mean.

Topic Index

Webster's Collegiate Dictionary 10th Edition(all underline, bold, and italic emphasis in this chapter mine):

"Saved1. a: *to deliver from sin* ***b:*** *to rescue or deliver from danger or harm* ***c:*** *to preserve or guard from injury, destruction or loss"* A13

"Salvation 1. a: *deliverance from the power and effects of sin."*A13

"Salvation:*Deliverance from the power of sin; redemption."* A13

Nelson's Illustrated Bible Dictionary (all underline emphasis mine):

*"In the Old Testament, the word salvation sometimes refers to deliverance from danger <Jeremiah 15:20>, deliverance of the weak from an oppressor <Psalm. 35:9-10>, the healing of sickness <Isaiah 38:20>, and deliverance from blood guilt and its consequences <Psalm. 51:14>. It may also refer to national deliverance from military threat <Exodus 14:13> or release from captivity <Psalm 14:7>. But salvation finds its deepest meaning in the spiritual realm of life. Man's universal need for salvation is one of the clearest teachings of the Bible."*C2

Topic Index

The terms "saved" and "salvation" means that we are rescued and delivered. So a logical question would be rescued and delivered from what? **When we turn to Christ we are saved from receiving God's wrath.** (In the following references, all underline emphasis in Scriptural text is mine.)

Table of Contents pg 1, 2, 3, 4

Romans 5:8-9: "God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from the wrath of God through Him."

John 3:36: "He who believes in the Son has eternal life; but he who does not obey the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him."

1Thessalonians 1:9-10: "For they themselves report about us what kind of a reception we had with you, and how you turned to God from idols to serve a living and true God, and to wait for His Son from heaven, whom He raised from the dead, that is Jesus, who delivers usfrom the wrath to come."

Topic Index

God is a loving God, but he is also a God of justice. Because He is Holy by nature He hates sin. His justice demands that His wrath is poured out on sin. The Bible tells us "the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Romans 6:23).We are also told that *"there is no forgiveness of sin without the shedding of blood*" (Hebrews 9:22). The good news is the only man that was good enough to pay the price of our sins was Jesus, and He did this for us on the cross (Colossians 2:13-14). **All we have to do is accept Jesus and His payment for our sins;** it is as simple as that. The Lord allows us to have our free will, He will not force Himself on us, yet He loves us so much that He suffered terribly and died on our behalf. Considering what He did for us, is it too much to ask for us to just accept Him?

Topic Index

It is a common belief in the world today that good people will go to heaven. Certainly they do not deserve to go to Hell, do they? Let's look to see what the Bible really has to say about this.

> Isaiah 64:6:*"For all of us have become like one who is unclean, and all our righteous deeds are like a filthy garment; and all of us wither like a leaf, and our iniquities, like the wind, take us away."*All of our righteous deeds are like "a filthy garment". This means that even the good things that we do are like a stained garment or rag before the Lord. This certainly does not sound good, does it?
>
> Psalm 39:5 *verily every man at his best state is altogether vanity."* (KJV) Now, you may be thinking that this must be describing mankind as a whole but what about the few who really are good? Consider what Jesus said in the next passage.

Table of Contents pg 1, 2, 3, 4

Topic Index

> Luke 18:18-19:*"And a certain ruler questioned Him, saying, 'Good Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?' And Jesus said to him, 'Why do you call Me good? **No one is good except God alone**.'"*
>
> The problem is that we say that a person is good because we compare them to other people. Compared to other people there are some really good people. However, the Bible does not use man as the standard for good. The Bible uses God as the standard of good. Jesus said, "only God is good" (Luke 18:19).

Since God is the standard of good in the Bible, compared to Him we are all extremely bad. It is a little easier for us to accept that we are not good when we realize man is not the standard. So you might say, "Okay, compared to God I am not good, but compared to other people I am a good person. Certainly I do not deserve to be thrown into Hell just because I am not as good as God himself." What does Jesus say?

Matthew 5:20-22:"For I say to you, that unless your righteousness surpasses that of the scribes and Pharisees, you shall not enter the kingdom of heaven. You have heard that the ancients were told, 'You shall not commit murder' and 'Whoever commits murder shall be liable to the court.' But I say to you that everyone who is angry with his brother shall be guilty before the court; and whoever shall say to his brother, 'Raca,' shall be guilty before the supreme court; and whoever shall say, 'You fool,' shall be guilty enough to go into the fiery hell."

The scribes and Pharisees were very religious. Many were considered "good people", yet, Jesus said that you had to surpass even that. Even by calling someone else a fool you become guilty enough to be cast into Hell. How many people do you know who never even called somebody a fool? In Matthew 5:28, we are told that if a man even looks at a woman with lust in his heart, he is guilty. Not only would you have to have a perfect life as far as your actions, but you would also need to be pure in all of your thoughts, for your entire life. Any person who does not measure up to this standard is in danger of being cast into Hell.

The Bible tells us that no man is that good. Romans 3:23: "for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God". I John 1:8: "If we say that we have no sin, we are deceiving ourselves, and the truth is not in us."

Topic Index

Without the rest of the Gospel message, this paints a very unpleasant picture for all of mankind. The questions every person has to answer are, "Will you accept Jesus and His payment for your sins?" Or," Will you, instead, turn your back on Him and choose the same destination as the devil and his angels?" Whether you believe this or not, these are the only two choices. Jesus said, "He who is not with Me is against Me" (Matthew 12:30).

Table of Contents pg 1, 2, 3, 4

Topic Index

Before a person accepts Jesus as Lord he is spiritually dead. The Apostle Paul writing to the Christians in Ephesus said they were dead in their trespasses and sins and were by nature children of wrath before they accepted Jesus as their Lord (Ephesians 2:1-3). Jesus, when talking to Nicodemus, said**, "unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God."** (John 3:3-10). The person who was spiritually dead becomes spiritually born. This is what it means to be born again. You were first born physically and when you receive this spiritual birth, you are born again.

Topic Index

By turning to the Lord you are also turning away from sin. Jesus preached and said ***"Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand"***(Matthew 4:17). Peter included repentance in the wiping away of sin. Acts 3:18-20 says:*"But the things which God announced beforehand by the mouth of all the prophets, that His Christ should suffer, He has thus fulfilled. Repent therefore and return, that your sins may be wiped away, in order that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord; and that He may send Jesus, the Christ appointed for you."*

Let's look at what it means to repent.

Webster's Collegiate Dictionary 10th Edition (all underline emphasis mine):

"Repent: 1: *to turn from sin and dedicate oneself to the amendment of one's life*
a: *to feel regret or contrition b: to change one's mind."*[A13]

Nelson's Illustrated Bible Dictionary:

"Repantance: *A turning away from sin, disobedience, or rebellion and a turning back to God<Matthew 9:13; Luke 5:32>. In a more general sense, repentance means a change of mind <Genesis 6:6-7> or a feeling of remorse or regret for past conduct <Matthew 27:3>. True repentance is a 'godly sorrow' for sin, an act of turning around and going in the opposite direction. This type of repentance leads to a fundamental change in a person's relationship to God*[C2]*."*

Table of Contents pg 1, 2, 3, 4

We can see, to repent means more than just feeling bad about something. True repentance involves a change of direction in one's life. To really turn to the Lord you must also turn away from that which He hates, sin. We have seen that we are all sinners and it is the sinners that Jesus came to save (Matthew 9:11-13). We are all spiritually dead until we are convicted of our sin, repent, and turn to the Lord. Once we do this we receive a spiritual birth and are born again. This does not mean all of your troubles will go away; in fact, we are promised we will have troubles, but Jesus will be with us through them (John.16:33, Matthew 28:20). This also does not mean that you will become sinless — the Apostle Paul himself struggled with this (Romans 7:24). But we are to confess our sins. "*if we walk in the light as He Himself is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus His Son cleanses us from all sin. If we say that we have no sin, we are deceiving ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say that we have not sinned, we make Him a liar, and His word is not in us*
(1 John 1:7-10).

Once we are born again it does mean we will change. 2 Corinthians 5:17 says,*" if any man is in Christ, he is a new creature; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come."*We also see in 1 John 3:9: "*No one who is born of God practices sin, because His seed abides in him; and he cannot sin, because he is born of God."*

This change that takes place in a true Christian will continue through their whole life. Philippians 1:6: *"For I am confident of this very thing, that He who began a good work in you will perfect it until the day of Christ Jesus."*

Topic Index

GRACE VS WORKS

Some people say we are saved by grace, while others say we are saved by works. For some we need to first define what this means. First of all, let's look at the dictionary's definition of these words.

Webster's Collegiate Dictionary, 10th Edition (all underline, bold, and italic emphasis in this chapter mine):

Grace: *"(1) a: unmerited divine assistance given man for his regeneration or sanctification."* A13

Nelson's Illustrated Bible Dictionary):

Grace: *"Favor or kindness shown without regard to the worth or merit of the one who receives it and in spite of what that same person deserves. Grace is one of the key attributes of God. The Lord God is 'merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abounding in goodness and truth'<Exodus 34:6>. Therefore, grace is almost always associated with mercy, love, compassion, and patience as the source of help and with deliverance from distress.* C2

Table of Contents pg 1, 2, 3, 4

Topic Index

Webster's Collegiate Dictionary, 10th Edition:

Work: *"(8) pl: performance of moral or religious acts (salvation by ~ s)"*[A13]

Works: *"(1) in process of preparation, development, or completion."*[A13]

Nelson's Illustrated Bible Dictionary:

"Works: *Acts or deeds. God's works are praised often in the Book of Psalms <Psalm 33:4; 92:5; 104:24> and Christ's works are thoroughly discussed in the Gospel of John <John 10:25-38>. Man's works are either good or bad, and these two categories are often mentioned together <Romans 13:3,12; Hebrews 6:1, 10>. Christians are taught to display good works <Matthew 5:16; Rev. 3:8>."*[C2]

Topic Index

To say a person is saved by grace means this: No one by his own merits or good deeds will ever earn or gain eternal life. In other words, no matter how good a person you are you will never make it to heaven on that basis. Rather, we are saved only by God's mercy and His payment for our sins on the cross. To say that a person is saved by works means that if you live a good clean moral life you will go to heaven when you die. This is basically saying that by trying to be obedient to God's laws you have earned the right to be in heaven. Scripture clearly shows that we are saved by grace through faith alone. There are verses that some have stumbled over believing they show we are saved by our works, or good deeds. Therefore it is important that we consider these verses as well. First we will show some scripture showing that our salvation is not by works.

> Romans 3:28: "For we maintain that a man is justified by faith apart from works of the Law."
>
> John 6:28-29: "They said therefore to Him, 'What shall we do, that we may work the works of God?' Jesus answered and said to them, 'This is the work of God, that you believe in Him whom He has sent.'"
>
> Ephesians 2:8-10: "For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the **gift** of God; not as a result of works, that no one should boast. For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them."

Table of Contents pg 1, 2, 3, 4

Topic Index

Paul says salvation is a gift of God. When you work for something you receive what is owed to you. *Webster's Dictionary* defines a gift as, "something voluntarily transferred from one person to another without compensation". We receive salvation as a gift from God. There is no way that we can compensate for it! Our righteous acts are like a filthy rag unto the Lord (Isaiah 64:6);by the works of the Law no flesh will be justified in His sight (Romans 3:20); and all of us have sinned and fall short of His glory (Romans.3:23). Considering this, how can we possibly be good enough? We can't! That is why Jesus died on the cross for us. We must accept His payment for our sins to be saved. We cannot earn our way to heaven by being "good".

Titus 3:5: "He saved us, not on the basis of deeds which we have done in righteousness, but according to His mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewing by the Holy Spirit."

Topic Index

There are those who try to abuse grace. Some people think they can say a prayer accepting Jesus as Lord and then live however they want. The idea is like buying fire insurance; once you've got it, then it might be okay to play with fire. The problem with this theory is that God is able to judge the thoughts and intents of our hearts (Hebrews 4:12). We are not saved by saying certain words in the form of a prayer — we are saved by faith. In *Webster's*, one of the definitions of faith is *" belief and trust in and loyalty to God"*[A13] Those who say they believe in God and claim they said a prayer accepting Jesus as Lord should show some changes in their lives. The Bible tells us even the demons believe there is one God (James 2:19). The demons believe, but they do not trust in, nor are they loyal to, God. Unfortunately this also describes many people claiming to be Christians. Granted becoming a Christian does not mean you become perfect, but it does mean there is a change in your life (2 Corinthians 5:17). A Christian does not become sinless here in this life (I John 1:8-10). Changes that takes place in genuine Christians will continue on for their entire lives (Philippians 1:6; see also I John 2:4-5, Matthew 7:21-23, Revelation 3:15-16, and Luke 6:44-46).

Table of Contents pg 1, 2, 3, 4

Topic Index

There were those in the time of the New Testament who also tried to take the attitude we just described. It was this very issue that James addressed:

> **James 1:22-2:26: (Chapter 1) (22)** "But prove yourselves doers of the word, and not merely hearers who delude themselves.**(23)** For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man who looks at his natural face in a mirror; **(24)** for once he has looked at himself and gone away, he has immediately forgotten what kind of person he was. **(25)** But one who looks intently at the perfect law, the law of liberty, and abides by it, not having become a forgetfulhearer but an effectual doer, this man shall be blessed in what he does. **(26)**If anyone thinks himself to be religious, and yet does not bridle his tongue but deceives his own heart, this man's religion is worthless. **(27)**This is pure and undefiled religion in the sight of our God and Father, to visit orphans and widows in their distress, and to keep oneself unstained by the world.**(Chapter 2)(1)** "My brethren, do not hold your faith in our glorious Lord Jesus Christ with an attitude of personal favoritism.**(2)** For if a man comes into your assembly with a gold ring and dressed in fine clothes,**(3)** and there also comes in a poor man in dirty clothes, and you pay special attention to the one who is wearing the fine clothes, and say, 'You sit here in a good place,' and you say to the poor man, 'You stand over there, or sit down by my footstool,'
>
> have you not made distinctions among yourselves, and become judges with evil motives?**(5)** Listen, my beloved brethren: did not God choose the poor of this world to be rich in faith and heirs of the kingdom which He promised to those who love Him?**(6)** But you have dishonored the poor man. Is it not the rich who oppress you and personally drag you into court?**(7)** Do they not blaspheme the fair name by which you have been called?**(8)** If, however, you are fulfilling the royal law, according to the Scripture, 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself,' you are doing well.**(9)** But if you show partiality, you are committing sin and are convicted by the law as transgressors.**(10)** For whoever keeps the whole law and yet stumbles in one point, he has become guilty of all.**(11)** For He who said, 'Do not commit adultery,' also said, 'Do not commit murder.' Now if you do not commit adultery, but do commit murder, you have become a transgressor of the law.**(12)** So speak and so act, as those who are to be judged by the law of liberty.**(13)** For judgment will be merciless to one who has shown no mercy; mercy triumphs over judgment.**(14)**What use is it, my brethren, if a man says he has faith, but he has no works? Can that faith save him?**(15)** If a brother or sister is without clothing and in need of daily food,**(16)** and one of you says to them, 'Go in peace, be warmed and be filled,' and yet you do not give them what is necessary for their body, what use is that? **(17)**Even so faith, if it has no works, is dead, being by itself.**(18)** But someone may well say, 'You have faith, and I have works; show me your faith without the works, and I will show you my faith by my works.'**(19)**You believe that God is one. You do well; the demons also believe, and shudder.**(20)** But are you willing to recognize, you foolish fellow, that faith without works is useless?**(21)** Was not **Abraham our father justified by works**, when he offered up Isaac his son on the altar? **(22)**You see that faith was working with his works, and as a result of the works, faith was perfected;**(23)**and the Scripture was

> fulfilled which says, 'And Abraham believed God, and it was reckoned to him as righteousness,' and he was called the friend of God.**(24)You see that a man is justified by works, and not by faith alone**.**(25)** And in the same way was **not Rahab the harlot also justified by works**, when she received the messengers and sent them out by another way?**(26)For just as the body without the spirit is dead, so also faith without works is dead."**

Topic Index

People who say we are saved by works will generally focus on the part of this passage that is in **bold lettering** in verses 2:21-26. Take another look at 1:22; James declares that those who do not live their faith are deceiving themselves. Then again in 1:26 he uses the persons' words as an example. James says if they do not control what they say their religion is worthless. Jesus himself said that a person's words show what is in his heart (Luke 6:45, Matthew 12:34). In James 1:27, James defines true religion as one that has action taking care of those in need and living a godly life. In 2:1 he is dealing with attitudes which are another matter of the heart — just as Jesus said "for the mouth speaks out of that which fills the heart". James is saying that our actions also show that which fills our hearts. The point James is making is this: if you have genuine faith, then your heart is right with the Lord and it should show in your life. Those who think they are saved by works should take a good look at 2:9-10; according to James, one sin makes you guilty of all. Considering that the wages of sin is death (Romans 6:23) this paints a grim picture.

In 2:14, James asks a very important question: "What *use is it, my brethren, if a man says he has faith, but he has no works? Can that faith save him?"* The answer to this question is no! As James goes on to show, faith without works is dead. In other words, if you have genuine faith you produce fruit. The illustration James used shows that Abraham had a genuine faith. This is shown in his obedience to do as the Lord said. In 2:23 James says, "Abraham believed God, and it was reckoned to him as righteousness". His righteousness came from belief. Abraham's belief resulted in obedience. To say a person is saved by works is like putting the cart before the horse; it just doesn't work. Sheep don't say "baaa baaa" to become sheep. They say "baaa baaa" because they are sheep. We as Christians do not do good works so that we can be saved. We do good works because we are saved.

Paul used this same illustration with Abraham to show that we are not saved by works. Romans 4:1-5: "What then shall we say that Abraham, our forefather according to the flesh, has found? For **if** Abraham was justified by works, he has something to boast about; but not before God. For what does the Scripture say? 'And Abraham believed God, and it was reckoned to him as righteousness.' Now to the one who works, his wage is not reckoned as a favor, but as what is due. But to the one who does not work, but believes in Him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is reckoned as righteousness"

Table of Contents pg 1, 2, 3, 4

Topic Index

Some have said we are saved by faith to begin with when we first accept the Lord. Then after this point we are justified by our actions. This is irrational thinking. The Bible tells us that Christ died for our sins (1 Corinthians 15:3) and the blood of Jesus His Son cleanses us from **all** sin (1 John 1:7). Now I ask you how many sins had you committed when Christ died for them 2,000 years ago? None of them, right? They were all in the future. Which sins does the blood of Christ cover? The Bible says ALL sin. Since all of our sins were paid for on the cross before we were born, how could we now after accepting the Lord be justified for our works?

Paul also addressed this issue. Galatians 2:20-3:3: **(20)"**I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the {life} which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me, and delivered Himself up for me.**(21)**"I do not nullify the grace of God; for if righteousness {comes} through the Law, then Christ died needlessly."**(Ch.3vs.1)**You foolish Galatians, who has bewitched you, before whose eyes Jesus Christ was publicly portrayed as crucified? **(2)**This is the only thing I want to find out from you: did you receive the Spirit by the works of the Law, or by hearing with faith? **(3)Are you so foolish? Having begun by the Spirit, are you now being perfected by the flesh?"** (See also Galatians.5:1-6.)

Paul here is very clear that we are saved by grace. He even states that if this were not so, then Christ died for nothing. He considered the idea that we are perfected by works (after receiving the Lord) foolishness. Following is another statement Paul made that some people misunderstand, thinking we are saved by works. While reading it keep in mind what he said here in Galatians chapters 2 and 3.

Topic Index

Consider Philippians 2:12: "So then, my beloved, just as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, **work out your salvation with fear and trembling."** Is Paul contradicting himself here? No not at all. In this same letter he said:"He who began a good work in you will perfect it until the day of Christ Jesus" (Philippians 1:6); and "conduct yourselves in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ; so that whether I come and see you or remain absent, I may hear of you that you are standing firm in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel; in no way alarmed by your opponents — which is a sign of destruction for them, but of salvation for you, and that too from God. For to you it has been granted for Christ's sake, not only to believe in Him, but also to suffer for His sake" (Philippians 1:27-29).

Table of Contents pg 1, 2, 3, 4

There are two ways to view this, and I believe both are correct and applicable to the context. First of all Paul declared in this letter that the Lord is the one who began this good work. He then admonished the Philippians to conduct themselves in a worthy manner, just as we saw James write in his letter. By Paul saying “work out your own salvation”, he was encouraging the Philippians to live in a manner worthy of their salvation. It is important that you recognize and make this distinction: he said, "work out your salvation" — Paul did not say "work *for* your salvation". Perhaps this illustration will make this concept easier to understand: You have a body, and when you exercise your body, it is called a “workout”. You are *working out* your body. When you are already saved and you continue to live in a manner worthy of the Lord, you are *working out* your salvation. You are not *working for* your salvation.

The second viewpoint is that since salvation also means deliverance, Paul was telling the Philippians through Christ to work through their hardships. When the Philippian church stood firm in one spirit, it was a sign of destruction to their opponents. It was also a sign that they were saved. This is the same thing James was saying in his letter — works were the sign that they were saved. It was important that they stood firm even in hard times. As Paul said, they were “*granted for Christ's sake, not only to believe in Him, but also to suffer for His sake*".

Topic Index

We are saved by faith, not works. But good works should be very important to the true believer. Remember what Jesus said: "Why do you call Me, 'Lord, Lord,' and do not do what I say?”(Luke 6:46).

Here are some related scriptural references that show we are saved by grace, not works: Genesis 15:6,Matthew 19:23-29, Luke 7:49-50, Luke8:11-15, Acts 15:8-11, Acts 16:30-31, Romans 3:19-28, Romans 4:4-5, Romans 8:8, Romans 10:9, Romans 10:13, and Romans 11:6.

Topic Index

Writings from church leaders in the first couple of centuries are not Scripture. They are, however, helpful in determining if the Church has changed any major doctrine or the interpretation of Scripture. The following quotes can be found in ***The Ante-Nicene Fathers****:*

Table of Contents pg 1, 2, 3, 4

Vol. 1,Polycarp, c.69-c.155, bishop of Smyrna

The Epistle of Polycarp to the Philippians, Chapters 1 and 2:**(Vol. 1 PDF pg. 24)**

> Our Lord Jesus Christ, who for our sins suffered even unto death, [but] 'whom God raised froth the dead, having loosed the bands of the grave.' In whom, though now ye see Him not, ye believe, and believing, rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory; into which joy many desire to enter, knowing that 'by grace ye are saved, not of works,' but by the will of God through Jesus Christ.'Wherefore, girding up your loins,''serve the Lord in fear' and truth, as those who have forsaken the vain, empty talk and error of the multitude, and 'believed in Him who raised up our Lord Jesus Christ from the dead, and gave Him glory,' and a throne at His right hand. To Him all things in heaven and on earth are subject." D1

Vol. 1, Clement I, d. AD 101, called Clement of Rome; the bishop of Rome, c.92 to 101

The 1st Epistle of Clement to the Corinthians, Chapter XXXII:**(Vol. 1 PDF pg. 9)**

> And we, too, being called by His will in Christ Jesus, are not justified by ourselves, nor by our own wisdom, or understanding, or godliness, or works which we have wrought in holiness of heart; but by that faith through which, from the beginning, Almighty God has justified all men; to whom be glory forever and ever. Amen." D1

Vol. 8, The 1st Epistle of the Blessed Clement, the disciple of Peter, Chapter II: **(Vol. 8 PDF pg. 125)**

> For not by eloquence or renown, by station and descent, or by beauty or strength, or by length of life, is the kingdom of heaven obtained; but it is obtained by the power of faith, when a man exhibits the works of faith. For whosoever is truly righteous, his works testify concerning his faith, that he is truly a believer, with a faith which is great, a faith which is perfect, a faith which is in God, a faith which shines in good works, that the Father of all may be glorified through Christ." D1

Clement of Alexandria c. 150-c.215, Greek Theologian

Vol. 2, The Stromata, or Miscellanies, Book 1, Chapter VII: **(Vol. 1 PDF pg. 275)**

> And now we must look also at this, that if ever those who know not how to do well, live well; for they have lighted on well-doing. Some, too, have aimed well at the word of truth through understanding. 'But Abraham was not justified by works, but by faith.' It is therefore of no advantage to them after the end of life, even if they do good works now, if they have not faith. Wherefore also the Scriptures were translated into the language of the Greeks, in order that they might never be able to allege the excuse of ignorance..." D1

Topic Index

Table of Contents pg 1, 2, 3, 4

The resurrection of Jesus is the central teaching of Christianity. This is not based upon blind faith. There is historical evidence for the resurrection that shows Jesus raised himself from the dead. Can you imagine the impact it would have on your life if you seen someone murdered and later talked and ate with that person after they rose from the dead?

You can click on Did Jesus rise from the dead? To start reading at the beginning of this topic or use the topic index to jump to the part that interest you most.

Topic Index

Overview of content in this section is as follows:

DID JESUS RISE FROM THE DEAD? (pg. 62)

THE IMPORTANCE OF THE RESURRECTION & ITS DOCTRINE **(pg. 62)**
If Jesus did not rise from the dead the Old Testament prophecy would not be fulfilled. (pg.62)
If Jesus did not rise from the dead we would have no forgiveness of our sins. ([g. 63)
If Jesus did not rise from the dead he would be a false prophet (pg. 63)

Jehovah Witnesses deny that Jesus rose bodily from the grave (pg. 63)
Jesus did not appear "only in the presence of his disciples" (pg. 64)
The Bible teaches that Jesus rose from the dead in the same physical body in which he died. (64)

HISTORICAL EXTRA-BIBLICAL EVIDENCE **(pg. 66)**
Grolier Multimedia Encyclopedia says
The evidence for the historical existence of Jesus is good." (pg. 66)

Evidence from the Roman historian Tacitus (pg. 66)
Evidence from Jewish historian Flavius Josephus (pg. 67)
Evidence from Justin Martyr (pg. 68)
The testimony of Phlegon concerning the darkness (pg. 68)
Evidence from Ignatius (pg. 69)
Evidence from Polycarp (pg. 70)
Knowable facts of history by Gary Habermas (pg. 71)
Applying to a courtroom scene (pg. 72)

Table of Contents pg 1, 2, 3, 4

EYEWITNESSES OF THE RESURRECTION (pg. 72)
People Jesus appeared to (pg. 73)
Jesus also appeared to non- believers (pg. 73)
Jesus appeared to more than 500 people (pg. 74)
Died martyrs for their faith (pg. 74)
Contrasted to Mormon beginnings (pg. 75)
Statements from Peter, John & Luke (pg. 76)

CONSIDERING THE FACTS

Known historical facts (pg. 77)
Jesus was indeed a person in history who died on a cross (pg. 77)
Disbelieved by Muslim, quote from the Koran (pg. 77)
Quote from "The Journal of American Medical Association" (pg. 77)
Added details from the gospels (pg. 79)
Precautions taken concerning the grave (pg. 79)
No motive for the disciples, as well as unbelievers to lie (pg. 80)

Simon Greenleaf a famous Royall Professor of Law at Harvard University comments on the testimony of the disciples (pg. 80)

These people claimed to be eyewitnesses (pg. 80)

The Pharisees had political and personal motive to expose the disciples for being a fraud by producing the body of Jesus. (pg. 81)

The empty tomb (pg. 81)
Change in the day of worship (pg. 81)

THEORIES PEOPLE HAVE USED TO EXPLAIN AWAY THE RESURRECTION

The disciples stole the body (pg. 83)
The swoon theory (pg. 83)
The disciples had hallucinations (pg. 84)
The women went to the wrong tomb (pg. 84)
Jesus had an identical twin (pg. 84)
The theory that fits all 12 known historical facts (pg. 85)

How then should we live? (pg. 86)
Recommended Reading (pg. 86)
Poem (pg. 87)

Table of Contents pg 1, 2, 3, 4

DID JESUS REALLY RISE FROM THE DEAD?

The resurrection of Jesus Christ is a central teaching in Christianity today. To the disciples of Jesus the resurrection was not just a doctrine, but also a reality. Can you imagine seeing someone you loved and knew well tortured to death in front of you? Then after witnessing his execution, he appears to you alive several times over a period of forty days. You talk to him, touch him and even eat with him. This would certainly have a profound effect upon your life! This is the case concerning Jesus and His disciples. There are those today who would have us believe that this is just a myth, and not a reality. Myths take centuries to develop; the Gospel, however, came into life in the same time and place as those who had both seen and heard Jesus before His crucifixion. The focal point of this section will be to examine the importance of the resurrection, doctrine concerning it, and some of the historical evidence to see if such a belief has any validity.

Topic Index

THE IMPORTANCE OF THE RESURRECTIONAND ITS DOCTRINE

The resurrection of Jesus Christ is important to Christian belief because **(1)** Without it the Old Testament prophecy would not be fulfilled;**(2)** Without it we would have no forgiveness of our sins; and**(3)** If Jesus was not resurrected this would make Him a false prophet.

If Jesus had not risen from the dead the Old Testament prophecy would not have been fulfilled.(All underline, bold, and italic emphasis in this chapter mine.)

> Psalm 16:10:"For Thou wilt not abandon my soul to Sheol; neither wilt Thou allow Thy Holy One to undergo decay."**Below we see the fulfillment of this prophecy in the New Testament:**
>
> **Acts 13:33-37:** "God has fulfilled this promise to our children in that He raised up Jesus, as it is also written in the second Psalm, 'Thou art My Son; today I have begotten Thee.' And as for the fact that He raised Him up from the dead, no more to return to decay, He has spoken in this way: 'I will give you the holy and sure blessings of David.' "Therefore He also says in another Psalm, 'Thou wilt not allow Thy Holy One to undergo decay.' For David, after he had served the purpose of God in his own generation, fell asleep, and was laid among his fathers, and underwent decay; but He whom God raised did not undergo decay. (The Apostle Paul is the one speaking in this passage. Peter refers to this Psalm in the same way Acts 2:27-37.)

Table of Contents pg 1, 2, 3, 4

Topic Index

If Jesus had not risen from the dead we would have no forgiveness of our sins.

The next thing we read in verse 38 of this same passage (Acts Chapter 13) is: "He whom God raised did not undergo decay. **Therefore** let it be known to you, brethren, that through Him forgiveness of sins is proclaimed to you."Note the use of the word **"Therefore";** Paul is saying that because Jesus rose from the dead we have forgiveness of sins! This is also confirmed in the following passage:

1 Corinthians 15:14-17: "if Christ has not been raised, then our preaching is vain, your faith also is vain. Moreover we are even found to be false witnesses of God, because we witnessed against God that He raised Christ, whom He did not raise, if in fact the dead are not raised. For if the dead are not raised, not even Christ has been raised; and **if Christ has not been raised, your faith is worthless; you are still in your sins.**"

Topic Index

When the Jews asked for a sign Jesus predicted He would rise from the dead. If Jesus had not risen from the dead He would be a false prophet.

John 2:18-22: "The Jews therefore answered and said to Him, 'What sign do You show to us, seeing that You do these things?'Jesus answered and said to them, 'Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up.' The Jews therefore said, 'It took forty-sixyears to build this temple, and will You raise it up in three days?' But He was speaking of the temple of His body. When therefore He was raised from the dead, His disciples remembered that He said this; and they believed the Scripture, and the word which Jesus had spoken."

Topic Index

There are some groups that deny that Jesus rose bodily from the grave. Rather they claim it was a "spiritual resurrection". One such group is the Jehovah Witnesses. They are also known as The Watchtower Bible and Tract Society. Following are two quotes from them (all underline emphasis mine).

Aid to Bible Understanding, 1971, pg.1395 **(PDF pg. 1395)** "Jesus appeared to his disciples on different occasions in various fleshly bodies, just as angels had appeared to men at ancient times. Like those angels, he had the power to construct and disintegrate those fleshly bodies at will, for the purpose of proving visibly that he had been resurrected."[A20]

Table of Contents pg 1, 2, 3, 4

*Reasoning from the Scriptures,*1985, pg.334 **(PDF pg. 333)** "At his resurrection from the dead, Jesus was brought forth with a spirit body.". "Why did not others see him too? Because he was a spirit creature and when, as the angels had done in the past, he materialized fleshly bodies to make himself visible, he did so only in the presence of his disciples."[A19]

There are a couple of problems with these statements. **(1)** First of all Jesus did not appear "only in the presence of his disciples." He appeared also to unbelievers. **(2)** The Bible teaches that Jesus rose from the dead in the same physical body in which he died.

Topic Index

(1) Jesus did not appear "only in the presence of his disciples." He appeared also to unbelievers. Paul was a hostile unbeliever before Jesus appeared to him. This can be seen in Acts 9:1-30. He is called Saul in the context there but we see in Acts 13:9 and Acts 22:1-21 that Saul is indeed the same person who is latter known as the Apostle Paul. This is after the forty day period that Jesus appeared to the rest of the disciples.

(1a) In John 7:5 we are told that not even the brothers of Jesus believed in Him. James and Jude were sons of Mary and Joseph and were half brothers of Jesus since they had the same mother. Later both become believers. Although it cannot be shown as to exactly when they became believers it seems likely that it was after the resurrection. We have no reference to them being believers until after his resurrection. We see in 1 Corinthians 15:7 that Jesus appeared to James after he arose from the dead. As for reference to show they were the brothers of Jesus, the following verses should be read: Jude1:1 and Mark 6:3. (Note "Jude" is short for "Judas" — See Greek word #2455 in the Strong's.) [C3]

Topic Index

(2) The Bible teaches that Jesus rose from the dead in the same physical body in which He died. John 2:18-22: "The Jews therefore answered and said to Him, 'What sign do You show to us, seeing that You do these things?'Jesus answered and said to them, 'Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up.' The Jews therefore said, 'It took forty-six years to build this temple, and will You raise it up in three days?' But He was speaking of the temple of His body. When therefore He was raised from the dead, His disciples remembered that He said this; and they believed the Scripture, and the word which Jesus had spoken."

When Jesus made this statement He had a physical body of flesh and bones. This is the temple or body that He said He would raise in three days. Since Jesus said He would raise this physical body, reason and logic tells us it was a physical body, not a spiritual body that was to be resurrected. Also we have already seen in Psalm 16:10, Acts 2:27-32, and 13:34-38 that this body would never undergo decay. What is the purpose of preserving the body if it is not raised from the dead and being used? I have had some Jehovah Witnesses tell me that the body did not decay, but God destroyed it by gases. Of course these Witnesses could offer no Biblical reference for such a view, but they had to rationalize it in some way to support this un-Biblical doctrine. Jesus took great pains to show that it was He Himself Who rose from the dead and not a spirit. Let us consider the following Scripture. Luke 24:39-43:*" 'See My hands and My feet, that it is I Myself; touch Me and see, for a spirit does not have flesh and bones as you see that I have.' And when He had said this, He showed them His hands and His feet. And while they still could not believe it for joy and were marveling, He said to them, 'Have you anything here to eat?' And they gave Him a piece of a broiled fish; and He took it and ate it before them."*

Everything Jesus offered them for evidence of his resurrection was of the physical nature. He spoke to them to them so they could hear and recognize His voice. Jesus showed His wounds from the crucifixion inviting them to touch Him. In John 20:27 Jesus told Thomas to put his finger into the wounds in His hands and to put his hand into His side. Jesus purposely asked them for something to eat and ate fish in front of them. Jesus also ate and drank with others (Acts 10:41). Jesus declared that a spirit did not have a body of flesh and bones as He had. He did things like these on several occasions over a period of forty days (Acts 1:3). They watched Him bodily ascend into heaven (Acts 1:9).

Jesus never said anything to them that would indicate these "convincing proofs", as we are told in Acts 1:3, should be interpreted as a spiritual body. If this was merely one of several fleshly materialized bodies to make Himself visible as the Watchtower claims, then Jesus purposely deceived His disciples. The moral implications of this are absolutely contrary to the Jesus we read of in the Bible.

So you see that the previous Watchtower statements are not Biblical. The Bible teaches that Jesus Christ arose in the same exact body of flesh and bones in which He had lived and died. It is this same body in which He ascended into heaven. This is not only what the Bible teaches, it is also the historical teaching of the church.

Table of Contents pg 1, 2, 3, 4
Topic Index

HISTORICAL NON-CHRISTIAN SOURCE OF EVIDENCE

Some uninformed people have tried to claim that Jesus never really existed. Others recognize He was indeed a real person in history but reject anything mentioned that is in nature miraculous. Modern historians rule out the resurrection because of their philosophical presuppositions, not because there is a lack of evidence. Because they believe that there is no such thing as a miracle, they rule out the resurrection on that basis alone. I believe it is wise to let the facts speak for themselves, even if it means we are proven wrong and forced to change our views. As for those who in their presuppositions claim "miracles do not happen", the question may be asked, "Where is the critic of Scripture who can without error explain everything that happens in the world today by a purely rational and naturalistic means?"

We will now examine some historical writings. We will show that certain events in the life and death of Jesus can be established as history without the use of the Bible. The following is found in the ***Grolier Multimedia Encyclopedia*** listing for "Jesus Christ":

> "Jesus...as he was known to his contemporaries was a Jew who appeared as a prophet, a teacher, and a sage in Palestine about AD 30. "THE HISTORICAL JESUS: The Christ-myth school of the early 20th century held that Jesus never lived but was invented as a peg on which to hang the myth of a dying and rising God. Yet the evidence for the historical existence of Jesus is good. "Non-Christian sources among Roman historians, TACITUS (Annals 15:44), records that the Christian movement began with Jesus, who was sentenced to death by Pontius Pilate." [G1]

Topic Index

In the book *The Historical Jesus* by Gary Habermas (pages 187-188) we find some information and a quote from Tacitus Annals 15.44 as mentioned above. **Cornelius Tactius was a Roman historian.** He has been referred to as the "greatest historian" of ancient Rome. He lived 55-120 AD.

> "Consequently, to get rid of the report, Nero fastened the guilt and inflicted the most exquisite tortures on a class hated for their abominations, called Christians by the populace. Christus *(a variant spelling of Christ from Latin)* from whom the name had its origin, suffered the extreme penalty during the reign of Tiberius at the hands of one of our procurators, Pontius Pilatus, and a most mischievous superstition, thus checked for the moment, again broke out not only in Judaea, the first source of evil, but even in Rome"[A14]

Table of Contents pg 1, 2, 3, 4

From the previous sources we can learn that:

> Jesus lived about 30 AD.
> Jesus was sentenced to death by the Roman procurator Pontius Pilate.
> During the reign of Tiberius,
> His death ended the "superstition" for a short time —
> but it broke out again in Judaea where it originated,
> then it spread to Rome.

Note that the reign of Tiberious was 14-37 AD. It should also be noted that Jesus was crucified at Jerusalem (Matthew 20:17-19, Luke 23:6-7). Jerusalem is in Judea — this is where Tactius the Roman historian says "a most mischievous superstition, thus checked for the moment again broke out" This correlates perfectly with Jesus' crucifixion, resurrection and the proclamation by His disciples.

Topic Index

Flavius Josephus was a Jewish historian who lived from 37-97 AD. He did not believe Jesus to be the Messiah (this can be attributed in Habermas' *The Historical Jesus* on page 192[A14]).

Vol. 3, Tertullian, a theologian around 193 AD, had the following to say about Josephus, Tertullian in Chapter 19 of *The Apology:*

> "...their critic the Jew Josephus, the native vindicator of the ancient history of his people, who either authenticates or refutes the others."[D1] **(Vol.3 PDF pg. 95)**

The following quote is found in *The Works of Josephus*,Book 18, Chapter 3, number 3:

> "Now, there was about this time Jesus, a wise man, if it be lawful to call him a man, for he was a doer of wonderful works—a teacher of such men as receive the truth with pleasure. He drew over to him both many of the Jews, and many of the Gentiles. He was [the] Christ; and when Pilate, at the suggestion of the principal men amongst us, had condemned him to the cross, those that loved him at the first did not forsake him, for he appeared to them alive again the third day, as the divine prophets had foretold these and ten thousand other wonderful things concerning him; and the tribe of Christians, so named from him, are not extinct at this day." [D2] **(PDF pg. 684)**

Here is a non-Christian source of ancient literature that verifies Pilate had Jesus condemned to the cross and people believed they saw Jesus appear to them alive after the crucifixion. As Michael Green points out in McDowell's book *Evidence* on page 187: "Josephus was a Jew writing to please the Romans. This story would not have pleased them in the slightest. He hardly would have included it if it were not true."[A1]

Table of Contents pg 1, 2, 3, 4

Topic Index

Justin Martyr was a Christian writer who lived during 100-165 AD. The following two quotes are his statements:

> "And that it was predicted that our Christ should heal all diseases and raise the dead, hear what was said. There are these words: 'At His coming the lame shall leap as an hart, and the tongue of the stammerer shall be clear speaking: the blind shall see, and the lepers shall be cleansed; and the dead shall rise, and walk about.' And that He did those things, you can learn from the Acts of Pontius Pilate." D1 **(Vol. 1 PDF pg. 144-145)**
>
> "Jesus Christ stretched forth His hands, being crucified by the Jews speaking against Him, and denying that He was the Christ. And as the prophet spoke, they tormented Him, and set Him on the judgment-seat, and said, Judge us. And the expression, 'They pierced my hands and my feet,' was used in reference to the nails of the cross which were fixed in His hands and feet. And after He was crucified they cast lots upon His vesture, and they that crucified Him parted it among them. And that these things did happen, you can ascertain from the Acts of Pontius Pilate."D1 **(Vol. 1 PDF pg. 140-141)**

These quotes can be found in *Ante-Nicene Fathers: Volume I, The First Apology of Justin*, Chapter XLVIII & XXXV. Justin here was appealing "the Acts of Pontius Pilate" to his readers. Justin apparently believed the critics could verify these things as actual events in this document. We can also see that Justin assumed his readers would know of the document he was referring to. It should be noted here that there is no known manuscript found, which contains the Acts of Pontius Pilate. Also this should not be confused with later fabrications by the same name. It is not known who wrote the document that Justin references. Gary Habermas notes in his book, *The Historical Jesus*, (pages 215-217) A14 that both Justin Martyr and Tertullian agree that this was an official document of Rome.

Topic Index

The next two quotes, **concerning the darkness and earthquake** at the time of Jesus' death (as recorded in Matthew 27:45-54) are from Julius Africanus. **Julius Africanus** took up chronological science in the imperfect state where it was left by Clement, with whom he was partially contemporary, for he was Bishop of Emmaus in Palestine **(Vol.2 PDF pg. 313).** He composed books of chronological history under Marcus Aurelius, who was a Roman Emperor from 161 AD until his death. Little seems to be known about who **Phlegon** was **(Vol.7 PDF pg. 412)** — his work lost; extracts from it by Julius Africanus, as well as others. We know that he was called "Phlegon, bishop of Marathon". **(Vol.5 PDF pg. 496)** and was also referred to as "Phlegon the Trallian"**(Vol.7 PDF pg. 412)** The Apostle Paul sent his greetings to him in Romans 16:14.**Tiberius Caesar** was emperor of Rome, 14-37 AD (Luke 3:1).

Table of Contents pg 1, 2, 3, 4

Origen was a theologian and lived during 185-254 AD. (Underlined words in this section can be entered in as a word search to find this information on the *Early Church Fathers* CD Rom put out by Logos Research Systems, Inc., Oak Harbor, WA,1997 [D1]. The dates are found in *The New Grolier Multimedia Encyclopedia*.) [G1]

> **Julius Africanus**, *The Extant Writings*,Vol.18 (James, *Ante-Nicene Fathers*, Volume VI, Roberts, Alexander and Donaldson, James): "**Phlegon** records that, in the time of **Tiberius Caesar**, at full moon, there was a full eclipse of the sun from the sixth hour to the ninth—manifestly that one of which we speak." [D1] **(Vol. 6 PDF pg. 331)**
>
> ***Origen*** *Against Celsus*, Vol. LIX, (*Ante-Nicene Fathers*, Volume IV, Roberts, Alexander and Donaldson, James.) "He imagines also that both the earthquake and the darkness were an invention; but regarding these, we have in the preceding pages, made our defence, according to our ability, adducing the testimony of **Phlegon,** who relates that these events took place at the time when our Saviour suffered. And he goes on to say, that 'Jesus, while alive, was of no assistance to himself, but that he arose after death, and exhibited the marks of his punishment, and showed how his hands had been pierced by nails.''[D1] **(Vol. 4 PDF pg. 819)**

Here we see even that the darkness and earthquake have been recorded. Some have argued that this is impossible; they say that the darkness would have to be an eclipse, and at that time period they say there was no eclipse. Phlegon *lived* during that time period — my contention is that he would know, better than people who lived after the event, whether or not there was darkness and an earthquake. There are no known just grounds to discredit Phlegon's testimony of this event.

Topic Index

Ignatius according to tradition was a pupil of the Apostle John. He is said to be the second bishop of Antioch after Peter and he lived between 50-115 AD. Ignatius also died a martyr for his faith and belief in the resurrection (this can be verified in *Fox's Book of Martyrs*, pgs. 7-8 [A5]; *Evidence*, by Josh McDowell, page 185 [A1]; and *American Peoples Encyclopedia*, Vol.10,page 895[A17]).

The following is a quote by Ignatius, which is found in *Ante-Nicene Fathers*, Vol. I,: "The Epistle of Ignatius to the Trallians", Chapter 9: **(Vol. 1 PDF pg. 56)**

> "Jesus Christ, the Son of God, who was descended from David, and was also of Mary; who was truly begotten of God and of the Virgin, but not after the same manner. For indeed God and man are not the same. He truly assumed a body; for 'the Word was made flesh,' and lived upon earth without sin. For says He, 'Which of you convicteth me of sin?' He did in reality both eat and drink. He was crucified and died under Pontius Pilate. He really, and not merely in appearance, was crucified, and died, in the sight of beings in heaven, and on earth, and under the earth. By those in heaven I mean such as are possessed of incorporeal natures; by those on earth, the Jews and Romans, and such

> persons as were present at that time when the Lord was crucified; and by those under the earth, the multitude that arose along with the Lord. For says the Scripture, 'Many bodies of the saints that slept arose,' their graves being opened. He descended, indeed, into Hades alone, but He arose accompanied by a multitude; and rent asunder that means of separation which had existed from the beginning of the world, and cast down its partition-wall. He also rose again in three days, the Father raising Him up; and after spending forty days with the apostles, He was received up to the Father, and 'sat down at His right hand, expecting till His enemies are placed under His feet.' On the day of the preparation, then, at the third hour, He received the sentence from Pilate, the Father permitting that to happen; at the sixth hour He was crucified; at the ninth hour He gave up the ghost; and before sunset He was buried. During the Sabbath He continued under the earth in the tomb in which Joseph of Arimathea had laid Him. At the dawning of the Lord's day He arose from the dead."[D1]

Topic Index

Polycarp is also said to have been a disciple under Saint John. Polycarp was bishop of Smyrna and lived from 69-155 AD. He also died a martyr for his faith. This can be verified in *Fox's Book of Martyrs*, page 9[A5]; *Grolier Multimedia Encyclopedia* (see "Polycarp" [G1]); and *American Peoples Encyclopedia,* Vol.15, page 1011[A17]. The following is a quote from Polycarp found in *Ante-Nicene Fathers*, Volume I, Roberts, Alexander and Donaldson, James:"The Epistle of Polycarp to the Philippians", Chapter 2:

> "Wherefore, girding up your loins," "serve the Lord in fear" and truth, as those who have forsaken the vain, empty talk and error of the multitude, and "believed in Him who raised up our Lord Jesus Christ from the dead, and gave Him glory," and a throne at His right hand."[D1] **(Vol. 1 PDF pg. 24)**

The fact that Ignatius and Polycarp wrote these things to others shows that this belief was no secret. This is important, considering the time frame when Ignatius and Polycarp lived. It is believed they personally knew the John who wrote the Gospel of John.

More quotes not from the Bible could be given providing more detail, but this should more than suffice. Without using the Bible we have shown confirmation for the following: Jesus was a real person in history about 30 AD. Many people believed He was the Christ told about in Old Testament prophecy. They claimed that Jesus healed lepers, blind, mute and even raised the dead. He was sentenced to death by the Roman Procurator Pontius Pilate during the reign of Tiberius in Judea. This death was crucifixion in which they nailed His hands and feet to a cross. There was darkness from the sixth hour till the ninth hour, and there was an earthquake at the time of the death of Jesus. This did not end Christianity, but rather it started up in the very place where Jesus lived and died shortly after his death; from there it spread to Rome. Many people claimed that after three days Jesus arose from the dead and appeared to many over a period of forty days.

Table of Contents pg 1, 2, 3, 4

Most of our quotes were from people who lived during the 1st century. Quotes that came after the 1st century were quoting from writings of someone who *did* live in the 1st century. It should be evident that what we read about concerning the death and resurrection of Jesus was no secret. Furthermore these were actual events in history.

Even if one does not believe in the resurrection of Jesus Christ based on Biblical information, it cannot be denied that it is a matter of historical record — that many people in the 1st century, when Jesus lived and died, did for some reason believe Jesus rose from the dead.

Topic Index

The following is from the book titled *Did Jesus Rise From The Dead?* by **Gary R. Habermas** and Antony G.N.Flew, pages 19 and 20:*"Some events are generally agreed to be facts by practically all critical scholars who deal with this topic today, whatever their school of thought or discipline. In other words, critical historians, philosophers, theologians, and scripture scholars who address this subject usually accept this factual basis. At least eleven events are considered to be knowable history by virtually all scholars, and a twelfth event is considered to be knowable history to many scholars. (1) Jesus died due to the rigors of crucifixion and (2) was buried. (3) Jesus' death caused the disciples to despair and lose hope. (4) Although not as frequently recognized, many scholars hold that Jesus was buried in a tomb that was discovered to be empty just a few days later.*

"Critical scholars even agree that (5) at this time the disciples had real experiences that they believed were literal appearances of the risen Jesus. Because of these experiences, (6) the disciples were transformed from doubters who were afraid to identify themselves with Jesus to bold proclaimers of his death and Resurrection, even being willing to die for this belief. (7) This message was central in the early church preaching and (8) was especially proclaimed in Jerusalem, where Jesus died shortly before.

"As a result of this message, (9) the church was born and grew, (10) with Sunday as its primary day of worship. (11) James the brother of Jesus and a skeptic, was converted to the faith when he also believed he saw the resurrected Jesus. (12) A few years later Paul the persecutor of Christians was also converted by an experience that he, similarly, believed to be an appearance of the risen Jesus.

"These historical facts are crucial to a contemporary investigation of Jesus' Resurrection. Except for the empty tomb, virtually all critical scholars who deal with this issue agree that these are the minimal known historical facts regarding this event. Any conclusion concerning the historicity of the Resurrection should therefore properly account for this data. The pivotal fact, recognized by virtually all scholars, is the original experiences of the disciples. It is nearly always admitted that the disciples had actual experiences and that something really happened."
A6

Table of Contents pg 1, 2, 3, 4

The book I just quoted from is a debate between Flew and Habermas. Flew does not believe in the resurrection and Habermas does. I find it interesting that Flew did not challenge this statement quoted here. Why? Because these really are knowable facts of history.

Topic Index

In a court of law when the hostile witness agrees with the defense it is considered a fact. Imagine a murder trial. The prosecuting attorney says that David murdered Albert. The defense gets up and says David did indeed kill Albert but it was an accident. Since both sides agree that David killed Albert, this would be considered a fact, and it would not be called into question. Since the actual events regarding Jesus' ministry, crucifixion and death are not disputed by those opposed to Christianity in that time frame when Jesus lived and died, the events themselves are considered fact.

From these known historical facts people have tried to come up with various explanations of what happened, to explain away the literal physical resurrection of Jesus. Yet, the account given by the eyewitnesses in the New Testament concerning the resurrection of Jesus is the only theory known that logically and accurately accounts for all twelve known historical facts concerning this event. Since these facts are established by critical and historical procedures, it is not logical reasoning for someone to reject the resurrection simply because they do not accept the inspiration of the Scriptures. These events can be shown in history outside of Scripture. If the resurrection of Jesus is not true then there has to be a reasonable explanation of what might have taken place based upon the known historical facts.

Topic Index

EYEWITNESSES OF THE RESURRECTION

I would like to point out something to those who reject the New Testament because it claims to be the Word of God: I have already provided confirmation, in historical writings outside of the Bible, for many of the events surrounding the crucifixion. Yet there is much more confirmation for the historical accuracy of the New Testament through other ancient writings and archaeology. **In fact, the New Testament — the entire Bible for that matter — never has been proven historically wrong on any point.**

Table of Contents pg 1, 2, 3, 4

People generally disbelieve the Bible because it claims to be the Word of God and records miracles that took place in history. Since it has been proven accurate time and time again and has never been proven wrong, it is not logical to reject it merely because it records also what may be beyond certain philosophical presuppositions. Due to these facts, those who reject the Bible because it claims to be the Word of God should consider the idea that possibly the Bible is true — and it is their philosophy that is wrong. A former Oxford lecturer, William Wand, stated this very well when he said, "there is no scholarly reason for rejecting possibilities before an investigation. An a *priori* dismissal cannot be allowed, even if we do not like the conclusion that is indicated by the facts. One must decide on the basis of the known evidence" (Pg. 59, *The Historical Jesus*, Habermas). And as Habermas points out in the same reference, "...conclusions that are drawn before and against the facts are both non-historical and non-scientific." A14

The conclusions in this case should be determined from what most critics would consider the minimal known historical facts that were previously listed.

Topic Index

The following names are people who were followers of Jesus and whom He visited after He was resurrected from the dead. He appeared to His original disciples — Simon Peter, James the son of Zebedee, John the brother of James, Andrew, Philip, Bartholomew, Matthew, Thomas, James the son of Alphaeus, Thaddaeus, and Simon the Zealot (Mark 3:16-18, John 20:24-31). Jesus also appeared to Mary Magdalene, Salome, and Mary the mother of James (Mark 16:1, Matthew 28:1-10). And Luke 24:13-34 tells us that Jesus also appeared to Cleopas, while Acts 1:16-26 reports that He appeared to Joseph and Matthias.

Topic Index

There are of course, repeated visitations; Jesus appeared to some of the same people more than once. At least seventeen different followers are mentioned by name as people whom Jesus visited after His resurrection. As mentioned earlier, Jesus also appeared to unbelievers — namely Paul, James and very likely Jude as well. This brings us to a total of twenty people, mentioned by name, who were eyewitnesses to the fact that Jesus was alive again after He was killed and buried. In any court of law, this would be a lot of eyewitnesses. Furthermore, those opposing Christianity in that era played the role to some extent of the prosecuting attorney. They could not disprove the testimony of these eyewitnesses and they certainly had motive to try. Should a jury be satisfied by an opposing lawyer claiming that maybe all of these eyewitnesses did not see what they said they saw?

Table of Contents pg 1, 2, 3, 4

Topic Index

These are only the eyewitnesses we can identify by name, but consider what Paul said in the following passage (1 Corinthians 15: 3-8):

> *"For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received, that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and that He was buried, and that He was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures, and that He appeared to Cephas, then to the twelve. After that He appeared to more than five hundred brethren at one time, most of whom remain until now, but some have fallen asleep; then He appeared to James, then to all the apostles; and last of all, as it were to one untimely born, He appeared to me also."*

Paul was saying that there were more than 500 eyewitnesses to Jesus' resurrection, most of whom were still alive. Many scholars believe that Paul was citing an actual creed that pre-dated his letter to the Corinthians. If they wished, the Corinthians could question all of the eyewitnesses to see if what Paul was saying was true. So if, in fact, the eyewitnesses did not exist, this would have been a very foolish claim for Paul to make. Yet we have no evidence of anyone in that era refuting this claim.

Topic Index

Concerning the disciples, one must consider that they claimed to be eyewitnesses that had seen, heard, touched, and eaten with Jesus after He arose from the dead. We only have two possibilities here. Either they really believed this to be true — or they were lying. What motive would the disciples have had to lie? What would compel them to be willing to be persecuted and die violently, if they were caught in that lie? Surely if several disciples had been caught in the same lie, they would have been put to death as one unit — but they did not die together, but separately. Unless otherwise stated, the following information concerning how the disciples died can be found in *Fox's Book Of Martyrs*, 1973, pages 1-5 A5 **(PDF pg. 1-5)**
(For those interested, the names of the original twelve apostles are listed in Mark 3:16-19):

> Peter was crucified in Rome. Peter was crucified upside-down at his own request, because he said he was unworthy to be crucified in the same manner as the Lord.
> Andrew, the brother of Peter, was crucified on an X-shaped cross.
> James, the son of Zebedee, was beheaded in Jerusalem by sword (Acts 12:1-2).
> Philip was scourged (flogged or whipped), thrown into prison, and afterwards crucified at Heliopolis in Phrygia, 54 AD.
> Bartholomew was cruelly beaten at length, and then crucified in 52 AD.
> John, the brother of James, was the only disciple who escaped a violent death (although the Romans once tried to boil him in oil). H was banished to the Isle of Patmos (Revelation 1:9).
> Matthew was slain with a halberd (a type of battle-ax and pike mounted on a handle about six feet long) in 60 AD.
> Thomas was thrust with a spear.

Table of Contents pg 1, 2, 3, 4

James the son of Alphaeus was beaten and stoned by the Jews; finally his brains were dashed out with a fuller's club.
Simon the Zealot was crucified in 74 AD.
Thaddaeus was martyred about 65 AD.
Judas, of course, killed himself before Jesus was resurrected (Matthew 27:3-5). Judas, one of the original twelve disciples, was replaced by Matthias (Acts 1:16-26). Matthias was stoned at Jerusalem and then beheaded.
Paul was not part of the original twelve, but his words are recorded in the New Testament. He also should be mentioned, since he likewise was an eyewitness of the resurrected Jesus. Paul was executed by soldiers; they allowed him to pray, then he gave his neck to the sword.

The remarkable thing is that these men were killed separately, over a period of about thirty years, because of what they believed and taught. None of them ever recanted their story about the resurrection of Jesus Christ! What motive could they possibly have to die for what they knew to be a lie? On the contrary, it is because they knew the resurrection to be true that they were willing to give their lives!

Topic Index

There is an interesting contrast in history of another group of twelve men and their leader and how they stood up for what they had said was true. The men I am speaking of are the followers of Joseph Smith, who was the founder of the Mormon Church. Jesus willingly laid down his life (Acts 8:32-35, 1 Peter 2:23) while Joseph Smith died in a gunfight in which he was fighting for his life (*History of the Church Vol.6*, pgs.617-618 **(PDF pg. 2580)** *Vol.7*, pgs. 100-103**(PDF pg. 1741-1742)** E7).
The following is a quote from Ezra Taft Benson, who is a former president of the Mormon Church (*Teachings of Ezra Taft Benson*, p.89): "Six of the original Twelve Apostles selected by Joseph Smith were excommunicated. The Three Witnesses to the Book of Mormon left the Church. Three of Joseph Smith's counselors fell—one even helped plot his death." E8

Why is there such a contrast between the followers of Jesus, who saw Him after He rose from the dead, and the followers of Joseph Smith? I believe the difference is simple: one group was standing for what they knew to be true; the other group was standing for what they knew to be false. This fact can be seen in the following quote by Brigham Young, a former "prophet" of the Mormon Church (*Journal of Discourses, Vol.7*, page 164 **(PDF pg. 172)** "Brigham Young, June 5, 1859 —Some of the witnesses* of the Book of Mormon, who handled the plates and conversed with the angels of God, were afterwards left to doubt and to disbelieve that they had ever seen an angel. One of the Quorum of twelve— a young man full of faith and good works, prayed, and the vision of his mind was opened, and the angel of God came and laid the plates before him, and he saw and handled them, and saw the angel, and conversed with him as he would with one of his friends; but after all this, he was left to doubt, and plunged into apostacy, and has continued to contend against this work." E9

I find it interesting that these men were not sure if they saw an angel or not. In contrast, Paul and the disciples of Jesus never doubted that they saw Jesus after He was resurrected from the dead. They were even persecuted, and eventually killed, for this belief. Would you stand under persecution and even death for something that you were not thoroughly convinced was true? If you were to trust the testimony of a group of men, which group of testimonies would you consider more credible — those followers of Jesus, or the followers of Joseph Smith?

Topic Index

It is true; others in history have died for a lie. However, you will find they usually *believed* their cause was the truth. The disciples believed the resurrection to be true because they saw the resurrected Jesus. In fact, the disciples saw Jesus, off and on, for a period of forty days (Acts 1:3). They talked with Him, they touched Him, and they ate with Him. They never doubted or denied their testimony of these facts. There seems to be no motive for their willingness to die for this testimony other than they really believed it to be true! Consider their own words:

> Acts 5:30-32 (Peter's statement): "The God of our fathers raised up Jesus, whom you had put to death by hanging Him on a cross. He is the one whom God exalted to His right hand as a Prince and a Savior, to grant repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins. And we are witnesses of these things; and so is the Holy Spirit, whom God has given to those who obey Him."
>
> 2 Peter 1:16 (Peter's statement): "For we did not follow cleverly devised tales when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but we were eyewitnesses of His majesty."
>
> I John 1:1-2 (John's statement): "What was from the beginning, what we have heard, what we have seen with our eyes, what we beheld and our hands handled, concerning the Word of Life, and the life was manifested, and we have seen and bear witness and proclaim to you the eternal life, which was with the Father and was manifested to us."

Acts 4:33 (comment from Luke):“And with great power the apostles were giving witness to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and abundant grace was upon them all.”

Table of Contents pg 1, 2, 3, 4

Topic Index

CONSIDERING THE FACTS

1. Known historical fact

We have already shown that many of the events concerning Jesus' life and death are established as historical fact. The Bible has never been proven historically wrong. The reason people reject the Bible is because it records miracles as events in history. The event in this case is the resurrection of Jesus. There is circumstantial evidence for the resurrection, as well as eyewitnesses. Also, there has never been an explanation given using naturalistic means which accounts for all of the known historical facts.

2. Jesus was indeed a person in history who died on a cross.

The fact that Jesus was a man in history who was crucified was already covered. This is a matter of historical record. There are some who believe that Jesus lived through the crucifixion, and that when the disciples saw the resurrected Christ, they were really only seeing someone who hadn't actually died. A similar belief is found in the *Koran*, the sacred writings of Muslims. In the meanings of the Holy *Quran* we read the following: Surah 4:157 — "*And because of their saying: 'We slew the* ***Messiah Jesus son of Mary****, Allah's messenger'–They slew him not nor crucified, but it appeared unto them; and lo! those who disagree concerning it are in doubt thereof; they have no knowledge thereof save pursuit of conjecture; they slew him not for certain...*" A18 **(PDF pg. 30)**

Topic Index

We have already established that Jesus was crucified and that this is a matter of historical fact. The next question is did Jesus actually die due to crucifixion? There is an article found in ***The Journal of American Medical Association,*** *Vol.255, No.11*, March 21, 1986, pages 1455-1463. This article makes some interesting points and comments. The quotes following are from this article. *"Jesus, apparently knowing that the time of his death was near, suffered great mental anguish, and as described by the physician Luke, his sweat became like blood (Luke 22:44). Although this is a very rare phenomenon, bloody sweat (hematidrosis or hemohidrosis) may occur in highly emotional states."*[B2] The article then relates how the trials of Jesus went throughout the night. Jesus was forced to walk about 2-1/2 miles between the various trials. During this time, as we are told in Mark 14:65 that He was beaten with fists, spit upon, and slapped in the face. These events led up to the scourging. The article at this point states, *"These physical and emotional factors may have rendered Jesus particularly vulnerable to the adverse hemodynamic effects of the scourging". "the usual instrument was a short whip (flagrum or flagellum) with several single or braided leather thongs of variable lengths, in which small iron balls or sharp pieces of sheep bones were tied at intervals."* [This was] *"intended to weaken the victim just short of collapse or death." "the leather thongs and sheep bones would cut into the skin and subcutaneous tissues. Then as the flogging continued, the lacerations would tear into the underlying skeletal muscles and produce quivering ribbons of bleeding flesh. Pain and blood loss generally set the stage for circulatory shock. The extent of the blood loss may well have determined how long the victim would survive on the cross."*[B2] Later we are told that the soldiers put a crown of thorns upon His head. Then, with a staff made of some sort of reed, they began to

beat Jesus on the head (Matthew 27:30). Jesus apparently was weakened enough due to this physical punishment that He could not carry the platibulum (the horizontal piece of the cross) 1/3 of a mile, so the soldiers made a man named Simon carry it (Luke 23:26). And when they had come to a place called Golgotha, which means "Place of a Skull", they drove spikes through His wrists and his feet (Matthew 27:33, John 20:25). (The article states "*the ancients customarily considered the wrists to be part of the hand.")* Going by archaeological findings it is determined the spikes would have been, according to the article, *"5-7 in. long with a square shaft 3/8 in. across". "The major pathophysiologic effect by crucifixion, beyond the excruciating pain, was a marked interference with normal respiration, particularly exhalation.". " Adequate exhalation required lifting of the body by pushing on the feet and by flexing the elbows and adducting the shoulders. However this maneuver would place the entire weight of the body on the tarsals and would produce searing pain. Furthermore, flexion of the elbows would cause rotation of the wrist about the iron nails and cause fiery pain along the damaged median nerves. Lifting of the body would also painfully scrape the scourged back against the rough wooden stripes. Muscle cramps and paresthesias of the outstretched and uplifted arms would add to the discomfort. As a result, each respiratory effort would become agonizing and tiring and lead eventually to asphyxia."*

We are also told that one of the soldiers pierced His side with a spear, and immediately there came out blood and water (John 19:34). The article continues, *"By custom, one of the Roman guards would pierce the body with a sword or lance. Traditionally, this had been considered a spear wound to the heart through the right side of the chest — a fatal wound probably taught to most Roman soldiers. The Shroud of Turin documents this form of injury.". "Therefore the water probably represented serious pleural and pericardial fluid, and would have preceded the flow of blood and been smaller in volume than the blood. Perhaps in the setting of hypovolemia and impending acute heart failure, pleural and pericardial effusions may have developed and would have added to the apparent water. The blood, in contrast, may have originated from the right ventricle or perhaps from a hemopericardium.". "Thus it remains unsettled whether Jesus died of cardiac rupture or of cardiorespiratory failure. However, the important feature may be not how he died but rather whether he died. Clearly, the weight of historical and medical evidence indicates that Jesus was dead before the wound to his side was inflicted and supports the traditional view that the spear, thrust between his right ribs, probably perforated not only the right lung but also the pericardium and the heart and thereby insured his death. Accordingly,* ***interpretations based on the assumption that Jesus did not die on the cross appear to be at odds with modern medical knowledge."***

Table of Contents pg 1, 2, 3, 4

Topic Index

The article in *The Journal of American Medical Association* stops at this point, but the Gospels have a little more to add. Jesus was also wrapped in grave clothes with 100 pounds of spices (John 19:39) and placed in a tomb with a very large stone placed in front of it (Matthew 27:60). Even without being beaten, scourged, and crucified, this would kill a man. Being wrapped up with the 100 pounds of spices would probably suffocate a person. Even if the person got out of that, how would they move a large stone uphill out of a ravine from the inside of the tomb? The average stone for this type of tomb has been estimated to weigh about one-and-a-half to two tons (*The Resurrection Factor*, pg. 54[A15]). To move a stone that large would be a pretty remarkable feat for a person in good shape, let alone for someone who, at the very least, should be in critical condition.

Topic Index

3. Precautions taken concerning the grave.

In Matthew 27:63-66, the Jews, speaking to Pilate about Jesus, said: "Sir, we remember that when He was still alive that deceiver said, 'After three days I am to rise again.' Therefore, give orders for the grave to be made secure until the third day, lest the disciples come and steal Him away and say to the people, 'He has risen from the dead,' and the last deception will be worse than the first.' Pilate said to them, 'You have a guard; go, make it as secure as you know how.' And they went and made the grave secure, and along with the guard they set a seal on the stone."

They really did not do themselves any favors by taking these precautions — it only makes the disciples' testimony more credible. The penalty a Roman guard suffered for leaving (or falling asleep at) his post was death. This punishment also applied to the rest of the men in the unit, even if only one of the guards deserted his post. The Roman seal itself was no small matter, either. To break that seal would be considered a violation against the Roman government. As we see in the Gospels, crucifixion was the sentence for the thieves who were next to Jesus (Mark 15:27) If a thief was crucified, it is likely that anyone who committed a violation against the Roman government would not be treated lightly. What caused the Roman guard to leave the post at the tomb even though the penalty for doing so was death? We are told an angel came and rolled the stone away (Matthew 28:2-4). This would account for them leaving, as well as reporting first to the religious leaders (Matthew 28:11-15). The religious leaders would be the only ones who might possibly have the influence in their culture to be able to save the guards' necks for leaving their post. Remember, it was because of the religious leaders' influence that a guard was given to secure the tomb in the first place.

Table of Contents pg 1, 2, 3, 4

Topic Index

4. No motive for the disciples, as well as unbelievers, to lie.
Remember that the disciples endured persecution and died for their belief, never recanting their story. In addition, their testimony carries improbabilities of a contrived story. For example, the fact that Jesus appeared first to a woman (Mark 16:9): according to Jewish principles of legal evidence, a woman's testimony would not be admissible in court. In such a male-dominated culture, it makes no sense to make up a story in which Jesus first appears to women, when it would hinder the belief of many.

The disciples at Jesus' arrest ran away; Peter even denied knowing Him at all (Matthew 26:69-75). After the crucifixion of Jesus, which was their point of sorrow and despair, the disciples soon became bold witnesses of the resurrection. If the resurrection of Jesus were not true then why would they do this?

There also would be a conflict of morals. Jesus and His disciples taught that one should live a life of good moral values. If they invented a story, they would also have to knowingly go against what their beloved leader Jesus taught. Their entire lives would have to become patterned after this lie and they would have to be willing to die for what they knew to be a lie. And, how would they influence Paul, James, and Jude to go along with this lie? Paul was very zealous in persecuting the church before he claimed to see the resurrected Jesus. It would take a powerful motive for him to change sides and then be persecuted and die for this belief, as he did. If his testimony is also untrue, what motive could there possibly be for him to do this?

Topic Index

Simon Greenleaf was a famous Royall Professor of Law at Harvard University. He produced a well known work entitled *A Treatise on the Law of Evidence*, which is considered by some the greatest single authority on evidence of legal procedure. While Greenleaf was still a professor at Harvard, he took the challenge of applying the Gospels and the claims of the eyewitnesses to see if they would stand as reliable when the rules of evidence were applied as in a court of law. He showed that they would indeed stand reliable. He wrote a book concerning this which is entitled *The Testimony of the Evangelists, The Gospels Examined by the Rules of Evidence Administered in Courts of Justice*. On pg. 32 of his book, speaking of the disciples testimony he concludes, "If then their testimony was not true, there was no possible motive for this fabrication".[A16]

Topic Index

5. These people claimed to be eyewitnesses.
There were more than 500 eyewitnesses. Can you imagine all of these people testifying in a courtroom? If the cross examination and testimony only lasted six minutes per person, you would have fifty hours of eyewitness testimony. The disciples said they talked with Jesus, ate with Him, and touched Him as well. Not all of these eyewitnesses were followers of Jesus before the resurrection.

Table of Contents pg 1, 2, 3, 4

Topic Index

The Pharisees had political and personal motive to expose the disciples as fraudulent by producing the body of Jesus. Why didn't they do this if they could do it?
(*International Standard Bible Encylopaedia*, Electronic Database,1996, by Biblesoft.)
"Reasons for Pharisaic Hatred of Christ**:** The opposition of the Pharisees to Jesus was intensified by another reason. They were the democratic party; their whole power lay in the reputation they had with the people for piety. Our Lord denounced them as hypocrites; moreover He had secured a deeper popularity than theirs. At length when cajolery failed to win Him and astute questioning failed to destroy His popularity, they combined with their opponents, the Sadducees, against Him as against a common enemy."[C1]

Topic Index

7. The empty tomb.
In Acts Chapters 3 and 4 we see that Peter delivered a sermon on the resurrection of Jesus in the very town where Jesus was crucified and buried shortly before. Thousands believed and Peter and John were arrested and told not to speak of Jesus anymore. It would be rather hard to explain why so many believed, and why the religious leaders did not simply produce the body of Jesus if the tomb had not been empty. We also need to remember the empty tomb itself is not what caused the disciples to believe. In Luke 24:11, we find that when the women told the disciples that Jesus had risen from the dead, the disciples would not believe them, because these words appeared to them as nonsense. They believed after Jesus appeared to them also. There is also an interesting note we find in John 20:7 — the face-cloth, which had been on His head, was not lying with the linen wrappings, but rolled up in a place by itself. This is rather puzzling if we are to believe that the disciples stole the body. Even if they did manage to get past the Roman guard, break the Roman seal, and move the stone, why would they take the time to undress the body and roll up the face cloth and leave the grave clothes there? It does make sense why the risen Jesus would do this, but why would the disciples do it?

Topic Index

8. Change in the day of worship.
The Jews highly regarded the Sabbath, which is Saturday, as the day of worship. In the Jewish mind, to change from Saturday to Sunday was an appalling thing to do. When and why did this change take place? We see hints of this change within the New Testament writings in Acts 20:7 and 1 Corinthians 16:2. This gives us a clue as to when.

> Acts 20:7: “And on the first day of the week, when we were gathered together to break bread, Paul began talking to them, intending to depart the next day, and he prolonged his message until midnight.”
>
> 1 Corinthians 16:2: “On the first day of every week let each one of you put aside and save, as he may prosper, that no collections be made when I come.”

Table of Contents pg 1, 2, 3, 4

The first day of the week is Sunday. In these texts we see hints that a meeting was taking place on Sunday. Since Paul instructed the Corinthians to make their collection on this day, it appears that this was done on a regular basis. So in these passages we see collections, preaching, and the breaking of bread taking place on Sunday. Since we find this in the New Testament, it appears this change from Saturday to Sunday gatherings took place at the very beginnings of the church. But why did this change take place? Justin Martyr, a Christian writer who lived 100-165 AD, tells us that they met on Sunday because this was the day Jesus rose from the dead. So Sunday worship is actually celebrating and bringing into remembrance the resurrection of Jesus Christ. Following are the words of Justin Martyr: (*Ante-Nicene Fathers*, Volume 1)

The First Apology of Justin, Chapter LXVII, "Weekly Worship of the Christians": "...on the day called Sunday, all who live in cities or in the country gather together to one place, and the memoirs of the apostles or the writings of the prophets are read, as long as time permits; then, when the reader has ceased, the president verbally instructs, and exhorts to the imitation of these good things. Then we all rise together and pray, and, as we before said, when our prayer is ended, bread and wine and water are brought, and the president in like manner offers prayers and thanksgivings, according to his ability, and the people assent, saying 'Amen'; and there is a distribution to each, and a participation of that over which thanks have been given, and to those who are absent a portion is sent by the deacons. And they who are well to do, and willing, give what each thinks fit; and what is collected is deposited with the president, who succours the orphans and widows and those who, through sickness or any other cause, are in want, and those who are in bonds and the strangers sojourning among us, and in a word takes care of all who are in need. But **Sunday** is the day on which we all hold our common assembly, **because** it isthe first day on which God, having wrought a change in the darkness and matter, made the world; and **Jesus Christ our Saviour on the same day rose from the dead**. For He was crucified on the day before that of Saturn (Saturday); and on the day after that of Saturn, which is the day of theSun, having appeared to His apostles and disciples, **He taught them these things,** which we have submitted to you also for your consideration." D1 **(Vol. 1 PDF pg. 152)**

Table of Contents pg 1, 2, 3, 4
Topic Index

THEORIES PEOPLE HAVE USED TO EXPLAIN AWAY THE RESURRECTION

The disciples stole the body. This idea originated with the religious leaders in Jesus' day. We find this in Matthew 28:11-15. The problem with this theory is that there is no motive. The disciples gained nothing out of telling of the resurrection except persecution. They would have to knowingly go against everything that Jesus, as well as they themselves, taught. What would cause someone to die for what they knew was a lie? Also this would leave the dilemma of Paul, who changed from being a persecutor of the church to being a strong witness who proclaimed the resurrection. How could the disciples have convinced him that he himself had seen the risen Jesus? Furthermore, this leaves the 500 other eyewitnesses — why would they all say they had seen the risen Jesus, if they had not? How could the disciples have gotten past the Roman guards that were guarding the tomb? In Matthew the story is that the disciples stole the body while the guards were asleep. If they were asleep, and did not wake up when the huge stone was rolled away from the tomb, then how would they know the disciples stole the body? Sleeping guards are also very unlikely as falling asleep would mean death for the whole unit. Some people try to claim the Jews or the Romans stole the body. Since neither group wanted the story of the resurrection being spread, then why did they not produce the body to silence this movement?

Topic Index

The swoon theory. This theory states that Jesus did not die on the cross. Instead Jesus was merely unconscious when His body was removed from the cross. The cool air in the tomb revived Him, and He got up and went to His disciples. They believed He had died; hence when they saw Him again, they believed Jesus had risen from the dead. To accept this theory you must believe that Jesus survived the flogging, the crucifixion, the thrust to the side with a spear, and being wrapped up in 100 pounds of spices. Then, He moved a stone that weighed one-and-a-half to two tons uphill out of a ravine. This accomplished, He fought His way past the Roman guard to appear to His disciples as the Lord of life. That takes more faith than believing the resurrection itself. Still it does not end here: Jesus then convinced 500 other people, besides His disciples that He raised from the dead. He also convinced Paul, the very one persecuting the church, that He was resurrected. Finally, He ascended bodily into heaven on a cloud while they were watching.

Table of Contents pg 1, 2, 3, 4

Topic Index

The disciples had hallucinations. Some people have claimed that the disciples had hallucinations, so real that they believed in the resurrection. People under great mental stress, as the disciples were, have hallucinated before, but this still leaves some problems. To accept this you would have to believe that more than 500 people hallucinated the same thing. This was not just one short episode of visions, but sightings that went on for forty days. The disciples touched Jesus, talked with Him, and ate with Him. Later Paul, who was against the church, also "hallucinated" this same thing. These are not typical hallucinatory phenomena. There simply is no other case in history where this kind of hallucination took place. And even if the hallucination theory made sense, why didn't the Jews or the Romans simply produce the corpse of Jesus to prove that He was dead? Several people did go to the tomb and found it empty, except for the grave clothes. Did the whole world also hallucinate the idea that the tomb was empty?

Topic Index

The women went to the wrong tomb. The idea here is that during their time of sorrow and confusion, the women simply forgot which tomb Jesus had been laid in. The problem with this theory is that you would also have to believe that the Roman guards, the Jews, and all of the disciples also forgot which tomb Jesus was in. This is very unlikely. And, even if the whole world was confused and did not remember what tomb Jesus was laid in, there are still all those pesky eyewitnesses.
☺

Topic Index

Jesus had an identical twin. This theory says that Jesus' twin brother was not in Jerusalem during the ministry of Jesus. He came back home right after Jesus was crucified and pretended to be his brother, Jesus. This of course caused everyone to believe that Jesus rose from the dead. The problem with this theory: the empty tomb.
How did this "twin brother" get past the Roman guard and steal the body of Jesus? How did he rise into heaven on a cloud while they were watching? We also need to remember that the risen Jesus still had the wounds from being crucified. He also still had the wound from being thrust by the spear. He offered these as evidence that it was He Himself to Thomas (John 20:27-29). Most importantly of all, how would this "twin" convince his other brothers, James and Jude, that he was Jesus? Since they also were half brothers of Jesus, they would certainly know if Jesus had a twin. Yet they were so convinced that Jesus was resurrected that they also died martyrs believing and proclaiming that resurrection.

Table of Contents pg 1, 2, 3, 4

Topic Index

THE THEORY THAT FITS ALL 12 OF THE KNOWN HISTORICAL FACTS: JESUS ROSE FROM THE DEAD, JUST AS HE SAID HE WOULD!

(1-2) Jesus did not survive the crucifixion but actually died and was buried (John 19:31-42). (2A) An angel removed the large stone, hence breaking the Roman seal, and frightened away the guards (Matthew 28:2-15).

The disciples lost hope because they believed that Jesus was dead (Luke 24:17-21, John 16:20, Mark 16:10-11).

The tomb was empty because Jesus rose from the dead (Matthew 28:5-7).

The disciples of Jesus, although they did not at first believe He would rise from the dead, came to believe in the resurrection because they saw Jesus alive afterwards, talking, touching, and eating with Him.. They also watched him bodily ascend into heaven (Luke 24:10-11 and 24:39-43, John 20:27 and 21:9-13, Acts 1:9-11).

(5A) The Jews and Romans could not stop the teaching that originated in the very place where Jesus died, because the tomb was empty and there were more than 500 eyewitnesses to Jesus alive after the resurrection (John 20:1-8, Acts Chapters 3 and 4, 1 Corinthians 15: 1-8).

The disciples' motive for being willing to die for this belief in the resurrection was because they knew Jesus' resurrection to be true. At this point, rejecting Jesus, who they were convinced was the Christ and God in the flesh, would be worse than death itself (Matthew 16:16, John 1:1 and 14, and 21:24, Luke 9:25-26).

(7,8,9) The resurrection was the central teaching of the early church, which was growing rapidly even in Jerusalem, where Jesus was crucified and buried. This should have been very difficult if it were not true (Book of Acts).

Sunday became a day of worship in the church, celebrating the day Jesus rose from the dead (Acts 20:7, 1 Corinthians 16:2). Note that the first day of the week is Sunday;

(11-12) Paul, who was an unbeliever before, and who was persecuting the church, changed totally. He became willing to be beaten, persecuted and killed for a belief in the resurrected Christ, because Jesus appeared to him after He rose from the dead. Another former unbeliever, James, became a devout follower after he had seen the risen Christ (2 Corinthians 11:23-33, Acts 9:1-26,1 Corinthians 15:7, Book of James).

Table of Contents pg 1, 2, 3, 4

Topic Index

HOW THEN SHOULD WE LIVE?

Jesus is the only religious leader in history to be foretold, in detail, before He was born. Jesus performed many miracles, offering them as evidence of who He claimed to be. Jesus predicted His own death and resurrection, and then actually rose from the dead. How then should we react? Jesus said that He was the only way in which mankind could come to God the Father (John 14:6). He said all those who were not for Him were against Him (Matthew 12:30). Jesus said He is the one who will judge the world (John 5:22). I suggest to you that the only wise thing to do is to commit your life to Jesus. Similarly, some people in the Old Testament were told, "I call heaven and earth to witness against you today, that I have set before you life and death, the blessing and the curse. So choose life in order that you may live" (Deuteronomy 30:19). If you deny Him, He will also deny you (Luke 12:8-9). If you have already committed yourself to Him then remember that Jesus said, "If you love Me, you will keep My commandments" (John 14:15). As Paul said, "Whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks through Him to God the Father" (Colossians 3:17). It is not through any church, or by doing good deeds, but only through Jesus Christ that you can be saved (Acts 4:12). If you have questions about what it means to be saved please contact us.

Topic Index

RECOMMENDED READING

Of course the most important book you should read is the Bible. If you would like more information as to why you should believe the Bible I recommend ,*Evidence That Demands a Verdict,* Vol. 1, by Josh McDowell. As far as the resurrection itself, I have read and feel comfortable recommending the following books to read for further study:

For a very detailed argument against the false doctrine of a spiritual resurrection of Jesus rather than a physical resurrection I would suggest reading *The Battle for the Resurrection*, by Norman L. Geisler, 1989, published by Thomas Nelson Publishers.

For an easy reading, yet detailed examination of Jesus' crucifixion and evidence for his resurrection I suggest reading *The Resurrection Factor*, by Josh McDowell. Also in this category I would list *Who moved the Stone?,* by Frank Morison.

If you would like to read a good debate between a believer and a non-believer of the resurrection of Jesus, I recommend *Did Jesus Rise from the Dead?*, by Gary R. Habermas and Antony G.N.Flew.

For more information on ancient history concerning the life of Jesus Christ I would recommend reading *The Historical Jesus, Ancient Evidence for the Life of Christ*, by Gary R. Habermas.

Table of Contents pg 1, 2, 3, 4

For more information on how the testimony of the disciples in the Gospel stands in light of legal procedure, I would recommend reading *The Testimony of the Evangelists, The Gospels Examined by the Rules of Evidence Administered in Courts of Justice*, by Simon Greenleaf. A reprint of his book is put out by Kregel classics.

If you wish to see a good medical perspective of the death of Jesus you should read, "On the Physical Death of Jesus Christ"; this is an article found in *The Journal of American Medical Association*, Vol.255, No.11, March 21, 1986, pages 1455-1463.

Topic Index

POEM

When they came to arrest Him
they fell to the ground
yet in His trial
He made not a sound
they whipped Him and beat Him
and pushed thorns in His head
little did they know
He would rise from the dead
His blood soaked into that wooden cross
little did they know
it was they that were lost
He stayed up there
when He could have come down
It was for us He wore the thorny crown
for you and me He died on that cross
if you do not know Him
my friend you are lost.

By Robert Kiser

Topic Index

Table of Contents pg 1, 2, 3, 4

This is a Bible study on **the Return of Jesus Christ**, how, when and why type of questions will be examined with scripture.

You can click on "The Return of Jesus Christ" to start reading at the beginning of this topic or use the topic index to jump to the part that interest you most.

Topic Index

The Return of Jesus Christ

Overview of content in this section is as follows:

THE RETURN OF JESUS CHRIST (pg. 89)

1. Why do Christians expect Jesus to return? Jesus said he would return (pg.89)
The bible tells us Jesus will return. (pg.89)
All prophecies have been accurate. (pg. 90)
The expectation of the return of Jesus Christ has been passed down to us by eyewitnesses. (pg.91)
People declaring that Jesus will not return were also foretold. (pg. 91)

How do we know Jesus has not already returned as taught by the Jehovah Witnesses? (pg. 92)
How will Jesus return?
Jesus will return on a cloud. (pg. 93)
Jesus left bodily and visibly with a cloud and will return the same way. (pg. 93)
The Bible teaches that Jesus rose from the dead in the same physical body in which he died. (94)

When will Jesus return? (pg. 97)
No one knows the day or hour when Jesus will return. (pg. 97)
We do know that certain events will take place before Jesus returns. (pg. 98)
The time of the rapture in relation to the 2nd coming of the Lord is debated. (pg.99)

Why will Jesus return? (pg. 99)
He is coming to judge the world. (pg. 99)
He is coming for his followers. (pg. 100)

Where will Jesus return? (pg. 101)

Application (pg.102)

Table of Contents pg 1, 2, 3, 4

THE RETURN OF JESUS CHRIST

For a couple of thousand years now Christians have been looking forward to and expecting the return of Jesus Christ. Some people don't think that Jesus is coming back while others claim Jesus already came back. I will approach this subject by the basic questions that Bible students ask themselves while studying the Bible. These basic questions are, “Who?”, “What?”, “When?”, “Where?”, “Why?”, and “How?” In this case the "Who?" is Jesus Christ, and the "What?" is His return. Now we’ll take a look at "Why?”.

Why do Christians expect Jesus to return?
Jesus said He would return.

The disciples expected Jesus to return because He said that He would return. John 14:1-3 reads, "Let not your heart be troubled; believe in God, believe also in Me. In My Father's house are many dwelling places; if it were not so, I would have told you; for I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also.” Later we see that Jesus' disciples understood that He would return because they asked Him, "What will be the sign of Your coming?" In Matthew 24:3 we read, “And as He was sitting on the Mount of Olives, the disciples came to Him privately, saying, ‘Tell us, when will these things be, and what will be the sign of Your coming, and of the end of the age?’" If Jesus was not going to return, He should have told His disciples they were mistaken when they asked, "What will be the sign of Your coming?". Instead, Jesus answered the question by telling them what things would first take place, and then concluding when He would return: "But immediately after the tribulation of those days the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light, and the stars will fall from the sky, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken, and then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in the sky, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of the sky with power and great glory” (Matthew 24:29-30).

Topic Index

b) The Bible tells us Jesus will return.

The New Testament is scattered with references of the return of Jesus Christ. We as Christians are not building a doctrine on a single isolated Scripture, but rather a central teaching of the New Testament. Following are just a few of these references.

1 Corinthians 15:23: “But each in his own order: Christ the first fruits, after that those who are Christ's at His coming...”

1 Thessalonians 4:16: “For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trumpet of God; and the dead in Christ shall rise first.”

Table of Contents pg 1, 2, 3, 4

Thessalonians 1:9-10: "And these will pay the penalty of eternal destruction, away from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power, when He comes to be glorified in His saints on that day, and to be marveled at among all who have believed-- for our testimony to you was believed."

Hebrews 9:28: "so Christ also, having been offered once to bear the sins of many, shall appear a second time for salvation without reference to sin, to those who eagerly await Him."

Revelation 1:7: "Behold, He is coming with the clouds, and every eye will see Him, even those who pierced Him; and all the tribes of the earth will mourn over Him. So it is to be. Amen."

Revelation 22:20: "He who testifies to these things says, 'Yes, I am coming quickly.' Amen. Come, Lord Jesus."

Topic Index

c) All prophecies have been accurate.

The Bible is full of prophecies that have come to pass just as the Bible foretold. Many of these prophecies are concerning Jesus. For example, before Jesus was born: (1) The Bible declared that He would be born of a virgin; (2) the Bible declared that His bloodline would be traced to Abraham going through David, Jesse, Judah, Jacob, and Isaac; (3) the Bible declared that Jesus would be born in Bethlehem and He would be proceeded by a messenger (John the Baptist); (4) the Bible declared that Jesus would be a performer of miracles and teacher of parables; (5) the Bible declared that Jesus would be betrayed by a friend and sold for 30 pieces of silver — furthermore, this money would be thrown down in the house of the Lord and the money would be used to buy Potter's field; (6) the Bible declared that Jesus' hands and feet would be pierced and there would be gambling over His clothing; (7) the Bible also declared that Jesus' bones would not be broken, but His side would be pierced, and there would be darkness over the land;

the Bible declared that Jesus would be buried in a rich man's tomb and that He would not remain dead; (9) Jesus himself declared that He would be killed and that He would rise from the dead. Considering that all of these and many more prophecies came to pass just as the Bible declared, it is reasonable to expect that Jesus will return — just as the Bible declares.

Table of Contents pg 1, 2, 3, 4

Topic Index

The expectation of the return of Christ has been passed down to us by eyewitnesses.

The writers of the New Testament who tell us that Jesus will return were themselves eyewitnesses of the resurrected Jesus. The disciples saw Jesus die, and then later they spent time with Him, over a period of forty days after Jesus rose from the dead. All of the disciples except John, who was exiled, died as martyrs for their belief that this actually happened. These men also heard Jesus say that He would return. Since Jesus said He would rise from the dead — and then rose from the dead just as He had said He would, it is reasonable to expect Him to return — just as He said He would. We have the testimony of eyewitnesses; eyewitnesses who were willing to die for their belief that Jesus rose from the dead and said He would return.

Acts 5:30-32 (Peter's statement): "The God of our fathers raised up Jesus, whom you had put to death by hanging Him on a cross. He is the one whom God exalted to His right hand as a Prince and a Savior, to grant repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins. And we are witnesses of these things; and so is the Holy Spirit, whom God has given to those who obey Him."

2 Peter 1:16 (Peter's statement): "For we did not follow cleverly devised tales when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but we were eyewitnesses of His majesty."

I John 1:1-2 (John's statement): "What was from the beginning, what we have heard, what we have seen with our eyes, what we beheld and our hands handled, concerning the Word of Life, and the life was manifested, and we have seen and bear witness and proclaim to you the eternal life, which was with the Father and was manifested to us."

Acts 4:33 (comment from Luke): “And with great power the apostles were giving witness to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and abundant grace was upon them all.”

Topic Index

It was foretold that there would be those who claimed that Jesus would not return.

Peter 3:3-4: “Know this first of all, that in the last days mockers will come with their mocking, following after their own lusts, and saying, ‘Where is the promise of His coming? For ever since the fathers fell asleep, all continues just as it was from the beginning of creation.’”

Matthew 24:48-51: "But if that evil slave says in his heart, 'My master is not coming for a long time,' and shall begin to beat his fellow slaves and eat and drink with drunkards; the master of that slave will come on a day when he does not expect him and at an hour which he does not know, and shall cut him in pieces and assign him a place with the hypocrites; weeping shall be there and the gnashing of teeth.”

Table of Contents pg 1, 2, 3, 4

Peter 3:8-9: "But do not let this one fact escape your notice, beloved, that with the Lord one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. The Lord is not slow about His promise, as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing for any to perish but for all to come to repentance."

Topic Index

How do we know Jesus has not already returned?
How will Jesus return?

There are those who claim that Jesus has already returned. One such group is the Jehovah Witnesses. The Watchtower claim that Jesus returned invisibly in 1914. Consider the following from the Watchtower Bible & Tract Society:

The Greatest Man, 1991, page 132 **(PDF pg. 446)**

"After the passing of many more years, Jesus provides a series of visions to his beloved apostle, John. By means of these visions that John describes in the Bible book of Revelation, he, in effect, lives to see Jesus return in Kingdom power. John says that 'by inspiration' he was transported forward in time to 'the Lord's day.' What is this 'day'?

"A careful study of Bible prophecies, including Jesus' own prophecy regarding the last days, reveals that 'the Lord's day' began in the history-making year 1914, yes, within this generation! So it was in 1914 that Jesus returned invisibly, without public fanfare and with only his faithful servants being aware of his return. In that year Jehovah gave Jesus the command to go subduing in the midst of his enemies!" F

Reasoning from the Scriptures, page 343 **(PDF pg. 343)**

"What is indicated by 'clouds'? Invisibility. When an airplane is in a thick cloud or above the clouds, people on the ground usually cannot see it, although they may hear the roar of the engines. Jehovah told Moses: 'I am coming to you in a dark cloud.' Moses did not see God, but that cloud indicated Jehovah's invisible presence (Exodus 19:9; see also Leviticus 16:2; Numbers 11:25). If Christ were to appear visibly in the heavens, it is obvious that not 'every eye' would see him. If he appeared over Australia, for example, he would not be visible in Europe, Africa, and the Americas, would he?

"In what sense will 'every eye see him'? They will discern from events on earth that he is invisibly present. Also referring to sight that is not physical, John 9:41 reports: "Jesus said to [the Pharisees]: 'If you were blind, you would have no sin. But now you say, 'We see.' Your sin remains.'" (Compare Romans 1:20.) Following Christ's return, some persons show faith; they recognize the sign of his presence. Others reject the evidence, but when Christ goes into action as God's executioner of the wicked, even they will discern from the manifestation of his power that the destruction is not from men but from heaven." A19

There are a couple of reasons why we should not accept the previous teachings of the Watchtower Bible & Tract Society. The Jehovah Witnesses teach that Jesus is Michael the archangel, who is a created being and inferior to Jehovah. They also teach that Jehovah is the only Almighty God, while Jesus is only a mighty god who should not be worshipped. In the Bible we are warned of false Christs: "And Jesus answered and said to them, 'See to it that no one misleads you. For many will come in My name, saying, 'I am the Christ,' and will mislead many.'" (Matthew 24:4-5)

The Jesus in the Bible is not Michael the archangel, or a created being. In fact, He is the creator, almighty God, one with Jehovah. Jesus is also worshipped in the Bible; the Father told the angels to worship Him. (References for all of were given earlier.)The point is that Jehovah Witnesses do not teach the Jesus of the Bible — they teach another Jesus, or a false Christ. We should not trust their doctrine when they are so far off on the fundamentals.

Topic Index

The Bible gives us information as to how Jesus will return. When we look at how Jesus will return it gives us insight to judge as to whether or not He returned invisibly in 1914, as claimed by the Jehovah Witnesses.

Jesus will return on a cloud.

This was actually first foretold by Daniel before Jesus was born, crucified, and resurrected from the dead.

Daniel 7:13-14: "I kept looking in the night visions, and behold, with the clouds of heaven One like a Son of Man was coming, and He came up to the Ancient of Days and was presented before Him. And to Him was given dominion, glory and a kingdom, that all the peoples, nations, and men of every language might serve Him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion which will not pass away; and His kingdom is one which will not be destroyed."

Matthew 24:30: "...and then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in the sky, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of the sky with power and great glory." (See also Matthew 26:64, Mark 13:26, Luke 21:27, Revelation 1:7.)

Topic Index

Jesus left bodily and visibly with a cloud and will return the same way.

Acts 1:9-11: "And after He had said these things, He was lifted up while they were looking on, and a cloud received Him out of their sight. And as they were gazing intently into the sky while He was departing, behold, two men in white clothing stood beside them; and they also said, 'Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking into the sky? This Jesus, who has been taken up from you into heaven, will come in just the same way as you have watched Him go into heaven.'"

How did Jesus leave? He left bodily and visibly with a cloud. Whether those watching could see Jesus in or on the cloud, this passage does not say. Jesus did go out of their sight, but was it immediately upon being received by the cloud, or as they were "gazing intently into the sky while He was departing"? They obviously saw something that they were watching as Jesus departed. The two men in white clothing even acknowledged that they **"watched"** Him go into heaven. For clarification we will have to look at other Scripture on the same subject. We are told here that this same Jesus who ascended into heaven will come back, and in the same manner in which He left. I emphasize that Jesus left *bodily* because we are told that "this Jesus" is the one who will return.

Topic Index

The Bible teaches that Jesus rose from the dead in the same physical body in which He died.

> John 2:18-22: "The Jews therefore answered and said to Him, 'What sign do You show to us, seeing that You do these things?' Jesus answered and said to them, 'Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up.' The Jews therefore said, 'It took forty-six years to build this temple, and will You raise it up in three days?' But He was speaking of the temple of His body. When therefore He was raised from the dead, His disciples remembered that He said this; and they believed the Scripture, and the word which Jesus had spoken."

When Jesus made this statement He had a physical body of flesh and bones. This is the temple or body that He said He would raise in three days. Since Jesus said He would raise this physical body, reason and logic tells us it was a physical body, not a spiritual body that was to be resurrected. We can see in Psalm 16:10, Acts 2:27-32, and 13:34-38 this body would never undergo decay. What is the purpose of preserving the body if it is not raised from the dead and being used? Jesus took great pains to show that it was He himself who rose from the dead, and not a spirit. Let us consider the following Scripture:

Luke 24:39-43: "'See My hands and My feet, that it is I Myself; touch Me and see, for a spirit does not have flesh and bones as you see that I have.' And when He had said this, He showed them His hands and His feet. And while they still could not believe it for joy and were marveling, He said to them, 'Have you anything here to eat?' And they gave Him a piece of a broiled fish; and He took it and ate it before them."

Everything Jesus offered them for evidence of His resurrection was of the physical nature. He spoke to them to them so they could hear and recognize His voice. Jesus showed His wounds from the crucifixion, inviting them to touch Him. In John 20:27 Jesus told Thomas to put his finger into the wounds in His hands and to put his hand into His side. Jesus purposely asked them for something to eat, and ate fish in front of them. Jesus declared that a spirit did not have a body of flesh and bones as He had. He did things like this on several occasions over a period of forty days. It is this Jesus, who had His same physical body in which He died, that they watched bodily ascend into heaven in Acts 1:9.

Table of Contents pg 1, 2, 3, 4

I also stated that we would look at other Scripture to show His return is visible:

Revelation 1:7: "Behold, He is coming with the clouds, and **every** eye will see Him, even those who pierced Him; and all the tribes of the earth will mourn over Him. Even so. Amen."

Following is the *Strong's Greek Dictionary* definition of the word "every" in Revelation 1:7: "3956 pas (pas); including all the forms of declension; apparently a primary word; all, any, every, the whole: KJV — all (manner of, means), alway (-s), any (one), X daily, + ever, every (one, way), as many as, + no (-thing), X thoroughly, whatsoever, whole, whosoever." C3

"Every" eye will see Him: this includes everyone, even nonbelievers — as well as *"even those who pierced him"*. How can this be interpreted as *"only his faithful servants being aware of his return"*, as we are told in *The Greatest Man* by the Watchtower? If the seeing is not literal then the phrase *"every eye shall see Him"* means nothing. This passage also tells us that at His return *"all the tribes of the earth will mourn over Him."* Why would "all the tribes of the earth will mourn over Him" if they had no idea that Jesus returned, and did not even believe in Him? When Watchtower claims that Jesus returned in 1914, the claim does not include the mourning of all the tribes of the earth.

In the Bible, Peter connects the fact that there were eyewitnesses to the resurrection of Jesus, with His coming again. The Greek word that Peter chose to use and is translated as *"coming"* in the following passage indicates a physical coming.

2 Peter 1:16: "For we did not follow cleverly devised tales when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but we were eyewitnesses of His majesty."

Strong's Greek Dictionary defines this "coming" as "3952 parousia (par-oo-see'-ah); from the present participle of 3918; a being near, i.e. advent (often, return; specifically, of Christ to punish Jerusalem, or finally the wicked); (by implication) physically, aspect: KJV — coming, presence." C3

Thayer's Definitions defines this same Greek word as "3952 parousia -1) presence 2) a coming, an arrival, an advent; the future visible return from heaven of Jesus, to raise the dead, to hold the last judgment and set up formally and gloriously the kingdom of God." C6

In 2 Corinthians 7:6-7, the Apostle Paul used this same Greek word (3952) when telling the Corinthians of the coming of his friend Titus: "But God, who comforts the depressed, comforted us by the coming of Titus; and not only by his coming, but also by the comfort with which he was comforted in you, as he reported to us your longing, your mourning, your zeal for me; so that I rejoiced even more."

Clearly the return of Jesus Christ will be physical in nature, the same as the coming of Titus to see the Apostle Paul was physical in nature. That which is physical in nature can be literally seen. To see the return of Jesus Christ will not be just a matter of faith. Believers and nonbelievers alike will literally be able to see His return.

Matthew 24:26-27: "If therefore they say to you, 'Behold, He is in the wilderness,' do not go forth, or, 'Behold, He is in the inner rooms,' do not believe them. For just as the lightning comes from the east, and flashes even to the west, so shall the coming of the Son of Man be." (See also Luke 17:22-24.)

In this passage, the disciples were told not to believe someone who says that Jesus is "over here", or "over there". Why shouldn't they believe them? The passage describes that His coming is like the lightning, and will be both sudden and visible. Jesus used this example so that they would know with certainty whether He had returned.

Remember this Watchtower teaching from page 343 of *Reasoning from the Scriptures*: *"If Christ were to appear visibly in the heavens, it is obvious that not 'every eye' would see him. If he appeared over Australia, for example, he would not be visible in Europe, Africa, and the Americas, would he*?" **A19 (PDF pg.343)**

At first glance this sounds like a reasonable argument. The only problem is that it limits God to what we are able to understand with our human understanding. In the beginning of the Bible we are told that God spoke, and the universe came into existence. I do not know anybody who can explain how this really worked. We do know that this is what the Bible teaches. We also know that many scientists also believe in a beginning of the universe. They call it "the big bang theory." Well, the Bible knew of the beginning of the universe long before scientists even imagined such a possibility. The Bible is confirmed by archaeology and fulfilled prophecy, giving us reasonable evidence to trust it. So the questions that remain are, does the Bible teach that the return of Jesus Christ will be a secret to many? Or does the Bible teach that every eye shall literally see Him when He returns, including nonbelievers? And finally, can God accomplish something that goes beyond our understanding?

Watchtower also used the argument that "clouds" in the Bible indicate invisibility. **Does a cloud necessarily mean invisibility?**

Luke 21:27: "And then they will see the Son of Man coming in a cloud with power and great glory."

If this cloud equals invisibility, then how is it that they see the Son of Man "coming in the cloud"?

Revelation 14:14: "And I looked, and behold, a white cloud, and sitting on the cloud was one like a son of man, having a golden crown on His head, and a sharp sickle in His hand."

If the cloud in this verse were invisible, how would John see one like the son of man, sitting on the cloud?

Revelation 10:1: "And I saw another strong angel coming down out of heaven, clothed with a cloud; and the rainbow was upon his head, and his face was like the sun, and his feet like pillars of fire."

Table of Contents pg 1, 2, 3, 4

How would John see the angel "clothed with a cloud", if that cloud made him invisible?

Revelation 11:11-12: "And after the three and a half days the breath of life from God came into them, and they stood on their feet; and great fear fell upon those who were beholding them. And they heard a loud voice from heaven saying to them, 'Come up here.' And they went up into heaven in the cloud, and their enemies beheld them."

If this cloud were invisible, how would their enemies have "beheld them" when they ascended into heaven in a cloud?

These verses make it fairly obvious that use of the word "cloud" does not necessarily mean that something is hidden or invisible.

Topic Index

4. When will Jesus return?

It is amazing when people try to attach a specific date to the return of Jesus Christ. This mistake has exposed false prophets on a few occasions. The Bible not only does not give us a date, but is very clear on the fact that we will not know the day of Jesus' return. Although we do not know the day of Jesus' return, we do know of things that will take place before He returns. Often the debate among Christians is not so much as to when Jesus will return, but rather the time of the rapture.

Topic Index

No one knows the day or hour when Jesus will return.

Luke 12:40: "You too, be ready; for the Son of Man is coming at an hour that you do not expect."

Mark 13:32-33: "But of that day or hour no one knows, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but the Father alone. Take heed, keep on the alert; for you do not know when the appointed time is."

Acts 1:6-7: "And so when they had come together, they were asking Him, saying, 'Lord, is it at this time You are restoring the kingdom to Israel?' He said to them, 'It is not for you to know times or epochs which the Father has fixed by His own authority.'"

1 Thessalonians 5:1-3: "Now as to the times and the epochs, brethren, you have no need of anything to be written to you. For you yourselves know full well that the day of the Lord will come just like a thief in the night. While they are saying, 'Peace and safety!' then destruction will come upon them suddenly like birth pangs upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape."

Table of Contents pg 1, 2, 3, 4

Topic Index

We do know that certain events will take place before Jesus returns.

Matthew 24:15-31: **(15)** "Therefore when you see the abomination of desolation which was spoken of through Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place (let the reader understand), **(16)** then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains; **(17)** let him who is on the housetop not go down to get the things out that are in his house; **(18)** and let him who is in the field not turn back to get his cloak. **(19)** But woe to those who are with child and to those who nurse babes in those days! **(20)** But pray that your flight may not be in the winter, or on a Sabbath; **(21)** for then there will be a great tribulation, such as has not occurred since the beginning of the world until now, nor ever shall. **(22)** And unless those days had been cut short, no life would have been saved; but for the sake of the elect those days shall be cut short. **(23)** Then if anyone says to you, 'Behold, here is the Christ,' or 'There He is,' do not believe him. **(24)** For false Christs and false prophets will arise and will show great signs and wonders, so as to mislead, if possible, even the elect.

Behold, I have told you in advance. **(26)** If therefore they say to you, 'Behold, He is in the wilderness,' do not go forth, or, 'Behold, He is in the inner rooms,' do not believe them. **(27)** For just as the lightning comes from the east, and flashes even to the west, so shall the coming of the Son of Man be. **(28)** Wherever the corpse is, there the vultures will gather. **(29)** But immediately after the tribulation of those days the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light, and the stars will fall from the sky, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken, **(30)** **and then** the sign of the Son of Man will appear in the sky, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of the sky with power and great glory.

And He will send forth His angels with a great trumpet and they will gather together His elect from the four winds, from one end of the sky to the other.

In this passage in Matthew it is clear that the return of Jesus Christ is after "the abomination of desolation which was spoken of through Daniel the prophet" **(verse 15).** Furthermore, Christ's return will be after "a great tribulation, such as has not occurred since the beginning of the world until now, nor ever shall" **(verse 21).** Finally, the return occurs "when the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light, and the stars will fall from the sky, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken" **(verse 29).**

Some people believed that perhaps Jesus had already returned in the Apostle Paul's day. Paul reminds them that certain events must first take place in the following passage.

2 Thessalonians 2:1-5: "Now we request you, brethren, with regard to the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and our gathering together to Him, that you may not be quickly shaken from your composure or be disturbed either by a spirit or a message or a letter as if from us, to the effect that the day of the Lord has come. Let no one in any way deceive you, for it will not come unless the apostasy comes first, and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the son of destruction, who opposes and exalts himself above every so-called god or object of worship, so that he takes his seat in the temple of God, displaying himself as being God. Do you not remember that while I was still with you, I was telling you these things?"

Table of Contents pg 1, 2, 3, 4

Topic Index

The time of the rapture in relation to the Second Coming of the Lord is debated.

Christians often refer to "the rapture" when speaking of end times. The word "rapture" is not in the Bible; rather it comes from the Latin, which in our English Bible is translated as "caught up". In 1 Thessalonians 4:17, "caught up" literally means to seize, to carry off by force, or to snatch out or to snatch away.

1 Thessalonians 4:16-17: "For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trumpet of God; and the dead in Christ shall rise first. Then we who are alive and remain shall be **caught up** together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and thus we shall always be with the Lord."

There are those who believe that the rapture, or this being "caught up", will happen before the period of the Great Tribulation spoken of in Matthew Chapter 24. Others believe that the rapture will take place in the middle of this time period. The third and oldest view is that the rapture will occur at the same time as the Second Coming of Christ, at the end of the Tribulation. The point is not so much *when* the rapture will happen, but rather the fact that it *will* happen. Whichever view you take concerning the rapture will not change the Second Coming of Christ. It is not our purpose to debate the timing of the rapture, but rather to point out that Jesus will return.

Topic Index

5. **Why will Jesus return?**

I am not aware of a Biblical passage which states that Jesus is going to return for any particular reason. However, we can discover why Jesus is going to return by examining what He is going to do when He returns. For example, if your wife went to the store and you did not know why, but when she came home she had a loaf of bread and some milk, then you would reach the conclusion that she went to the store to buy bread and milk. The Bible does tell us what Jesus is going to do when he comes back.

Topic Index

Coming to judge the world (punishment and reward).

Matthew 16:24-27: "Then Jesus said to His disciples, 'If anyone wishes to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me. For whoever wishes to save his life shall lose it; but whoever loses his life for My sake shall find it. For what will a man be profited, if he gains the whole world, and forfeits his soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul? For the Son of Man is going to come in the glory of His Father with His angels; and will then recompense every man according to his deeds."

Table of Contents pg 1, 2, 3, 4

2 Thessalonians 1:6-10: “For after all it is only just for God to repay with affliction those who afflict you, and to give relief to you who are afflicted and to us as well when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with His mighty angels in flaming fire, dealing out retribution to those who do not know God and to those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus. And these will pay the penalty of eternal destruction, away from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power, when He comes to be glorified in His saints on that day, and to be marveled at among all who have believed — for our testimony to you was believed.”

1 Peter 5:4: “And when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the unfading crown of glory.”

Revelation 3:11: “I am coming quickly; hold fast what you have, in order that no one take your crown.”

Revelation 22:12: "Behold, I am coming quickly, and My reward is with Me, to render to every man according to what he has done.”

Topic Index

Coming for his followers:

John 14:2-3: "In My Father's house are many dwelling places; if it were not so, I would have told you; for I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also.”

Hebrews 9:28: “so Christ also, having been offered once to bear the sins of many, shall appear a second time for salvation without reference to sin, to those who eagerly await Him.”

1 Thessalonians 4:15-17: “For this we say to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive, and remain until the coming of the Lord, shall not precede those who have fallen asleep. For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trumpet of God; and the dead in Christ shall rise first. Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and thus we shall always be with the Lord.”

Table of Contents pg 1, 2, 3, 4

Topic Index

6. Where will Jesus return?

To return implies that one first left. Jesus left earth and went to heaven. When He returns He will come back to planet earth (Acts 1:11, Matthew 24:30, Mark 16:19, Romans 8:34). The question remains, *where* on planet earth will He return?

Zechariah 14:1-9: "**(1)** Behold, a day is coming for the LORD when the spoil taken from you will be divided among you. **(2)** For I will gather all the nations against Jerusalem to battle, and the city will be captured, the houses plundered, the women ravished, and half of the city exiled, but the rest of the people will not be cut off from the city. **(3)** Then the LORD will go forth and fight against those nations, as when He fights on a day of battle. **(4)** And **in that day His feet will stand on the Mount of Olives, which is in front of Jerusalem** on the east; and the Mount of Olives will be split in its middle from east to west by a very large valley, so that half of the mountain will move toward the north and the other half toward the south. **(5)** And you will flee by the valley of My mountains, for the valley of the mountains will reach to Azel; yes, you will flee just as you fled before the earthquake in the days of Uzziah king of Judah. Then the LORD, my God, will come, and all the holy ones with Him! **(6)** And it will come about in that day that there will be no light; the luminaries will dwindle. **(7)** For it will be a unique day which is known to the LORD, neither day nor night, but it will come about that at evening time there will be light. **(8)** And it will come about in that day that living waters will flow out of Jerusalem, half of them toward the eastern sea and the other half toward the western sea; it will be in summer as well as in winter. **(9)** And the LORD will be king over all the earth; in that day the LORD will be the only one, and His name the only one."

In the text we see that "the LORD, my God, will come, and all the holy ones with Him!"; "And the LORD will be king over all the earth; in that day the LORD will be the only one." This is our indication that the text is speaking of the day in which the Lord returns (compare with 1 Thessalonians 3:13 and Revelation 11:15). The repeating of the phrase "in that day" informs us that the passage is speaking of what will happen during this day, not what will happen over several days or weeks.

Table of Contents pg 1, 2, 3, 4

Topic Index

7. Application

The Bible gives us direction in the way that we should behave in many areas of our life. I have selected a few of these passages that are tied directly to His return in the context.

1 Corinthians 4:5: "Therefore do not go on passing judgment before the time, but wait until the Lord comes who will both bring to light the things hidden in the darkness and disclose the motives of men's hearts; and then each man's praise will come to him from God."

1 Corinthians 11:26: "For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until He comes."

I John 2:28: "And now, little children, abide in Him, so that when He appears, we may have confidence and not shrink away from Him in shame at His coming."

Peter 3:8-14: "**(8)** But do not let this one fact escape your notice, beloved, that with the Lord one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. **(9)** The Lord is not slow about His promise, as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing for any to perish but for all to come to repentance. **(10)** But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, in which the heavens will pass away with a roar and the elements will be destroyed with intense heat, and the earth and its works will be burned up. **(11)** Since all these things are to be destroyed in this way, what sort of people ought you to be in holy conduct and godliness, **(12)** looking for and hastening the coming of the day of God, on account of which the heavens will be destroyed by burning, and the elements will melt with intense heat! **(13)** But according to His promise we are looking for new heavens and a new earth, in which righteousness dwells. **(14)** Therefore, beloved, since you look for these things, be diligent to be found by Him in peace, spotless and blameless."

Topic Index

Table of Contents pg 1, 2, 3, 4

Is the Bible true? Is there any evidence for it? Why should I believe the Bible? These are good questions that people ask and there are good answers. Yes it is true and there is evidence. It is not a blind faith. You do not need to throw your brains out the window to be a Christian.

You can click on **"Is the Bible the Word of God"** to start reading at the beginning of this topic or use the topic index to jump to the part that interest you most.

Topic Index

Is the Bible the word of God?

Overview of content in this section is as follows:

IS THE BIBLE THE WORD OF GOD? (pg. 105)

Definition of the word "inspired" (pg. 105)

What about other books that claim to be the word of God?
Each section in this part is contrasted to the Book of Mormon (pg. 105)

It's contents should be beyond the ability of mans writing creativity (pg. 106)

It should be able to withstand the test of time and attacks of critics (pg. 106)

Quote from Time magazine (pg. 106)

The historical part of it should be able to be confirmed with archeology, it should be historically accurate. (pg. 107)

Its prophetic messages should not be able to be proven false. (pg. 108)

Science should not be able to prove its message to be untrue (pg. 109)

Since the book claims to be ancient there should be some sort of manuscript evidence verifying its transmission of the text to be accurate (pg.109)

Its message should have the ability to change people's lives (pg.111)

Table of Contents pg 1, 2, 3, 4

Prophecy in the Bible shows its authenticity (pg. 112)
Daniel part 1
The dating of the book of Daniel
Test of a prophet (pg.112)
Late dating the Book of Daniel (pg.112)
Date of the Septuagint (pg. 113)
Josephus dating Daniel (pg. 114)
Is Josephus reliable? (pg.114)
Dating Nebuchadnezzar (pg. 115)
Dating Daniel with Ezekiel (pg. 116)
Daniel according to Jesus and Paul (pg. 116)
Webster's Family Encyclopedia dates Daniel (pg. 117)
Easton's Bible Dictionary and the language of Daniel (pg.117)
Context claims Daniel as the author (pg. 118)
Summary of Daniel Part 1 (pg.120)
Interesting Quotes (pg.121)

Daniel Part 2
World history told in advance and proven accurate (pg. 122)
God placed Nebuchadnezzar in power (pg. 122)
Nebuchadnezzar's dream (pg. 122)
Interpretation of the dream (pg. 123)
Introducing the Medes & Persians (pg. 124)
Those who question Belshazzar (pg.124)
So what really took place in history? (pg. 126)
Introducing the kingdom of Greece (pg. 129)
The Roman Empire (pg. 131)
A divided empire (pg. 132)
In the days of those kings a kingdom that will last forever (pg. 134)
Why is any of this important? (pg. 138)

The Bible Reveals Scientific Fact Prior to Human Discovery (pg. 139)
The earth suspended in space (pg. 139)
Does air have weight? (pg. 139)
Life of the flesh is in the blood (pg. 140)
The hydrological cycle (pg .140)
Springs in the ocean floor (pg.141)
Jet streams (pg.141)
Stretching out the heavens (pg. 142)

Table of Contents pg 1, 2, 3, 4

IS THE BIBLE REALLY THE WORD OF GOD?
What about other books that are claimed to be the word of God?

Let's start by looking to see what the Bible says about itself (all underline, bold, and italic emphasis in this section are mine): 2 Timothy 3:16-17 — "All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work."

The word **"inspired"** here in the Greek literally means "divinely breathed" by God. What does God-breathed mean? God spoke through men to say exactly what He wanted to say. At the same time He allowed us to see the personality of the writer without deviating from the message that He wanted put forth. So every word in our Greek and Hebrew Bible is really from God. Of course, that is quite a claim, and it is reasonable for someone to question why they should believe this. Just because someone *says* that a book is the Word of God, or even if the Bible claims to be in its own text, should we believe that this is true? Mormons tell us that the Book of Mormon is also the Word of God. If a book (or set of books) is actually the Word of God, there should be some sort of evidence to validate such a claim.

Topic Index

Let's subject both the Bible and the *Book of Mormon* to the following test. The true Word of God should:

Be beyond the ability of man's writing creativity;
Be able to withstand the test of time and attacks of critics;
Be able to verify its historical claims with evidence from archaeology;
Be able to show evidence of past fulfillment of its prophecies (the prophetic messages should not proven false);
Be scientifically sound;
Be able to prove claims of ancient text and verify its transmission of the text to be accurate;
Be life-changing in its message.

As I will show, the Bible can pass all of these tests, validating its claim of being the Word of God. Conversely, the *Book of Mormon* fails several of these tests.

Table of Contents pg 1, 2, 3, 4

Topic Index

1) Be beyond the ability of man's writing creativity.
It should be remembered that the Bible is not just one book. The Bible actually contains sixty-six books, from at least forty different authors. The Bible covers a time-span of few thousand years. The authors lived in different centuries. It was written on three different continents — Africa, Asia, and Europe. The authors of these books were from different backgrounds and lifestyles, and included a doctor, kings, a fisherman, and an ex-Pharisee. The Bible was also written in three different languages — Aramaic, Hebrew, and Greek. In theory, it would seem impossible to get this many people — from different walks of life, different countries, diverse cultures, time frames, and languages — to agree without conflict on controversial subjects such as God, sin, and salvation. And yet it happened — with so much harmony that each book is not really complete without the other. These books together have one central theme (Jesus): the coming of the Messiah, His arrival and work, and looking for His return. This would seem impossible unless one mind is controlling the effort. This one mind cannot be a man's, since the time frame is such a long period and the authors lived in different centuries. Man simply does not live that long. What other set of books can make such a claim as this?

The Book of Mormon cannot claim this — at least not in any way that can be verified, because it has no known ancient manuscripts. Unlike the Bible, it can't be shown that the contents of the book cover any large time period. How do we know Alma, Nephi, or any of the characters mentioned actually existed long ago? Without any manuscripts for the *Book of Mormon*, we have no way of proving that Joseph Smith is not the author of the entire book. Some have claimed that a man could not write fantasy in such detail. Having read Tolkien's *The Hobbit,* I know this is indeed possible.

Topic Index

2) Be able to withstand the test of time and attacks of critics.
People have attacked the Bible for a couple of hundred years. Yet it has not been proven untrue in any of its teachings or history. *Time Magazine* made an interesting statement that I would like to quote.

From ***Time Magazine*, December 30, 1974**: "After more than two centuries of facing the heaviest scientific guns that could be brought to bear, the bible has survived and [is] perhaps better for the siege even on the critics' own terms. Historical fact, the scriptures seem more acceptable now than they did when the rationalists began the attack."[B1]

On the other hand, numerous books have been written proving that the content of *The Book of Mormon* has no historical significance. *The Book of Mormon* has nothing to validate its claims. The fact is, in many ways *The Book of Mormon* is proven unreliable. I'll mention just a couple of books that show this — *Archeology and The Book of Mormon* by Jerald and Sandra Tanner, and *Are the Mormon Scriptures Reliable?* By Harry L.Ropp.

Table of Contents pg 1, 2, 3, 4

Topic Index

3) Be able to verify its historical claims with evidence from archaeology.
There are numerous books that are full of archaeological discoveries confirming the historical accuracy of the Bible. I cite here just one archaeological discovery confirming the Bible's accuracy — all the way back to some of the content in the book of Genesis. The city of Ebla was discovered in an archaeological dig around Jerusalem. Between 1968 and 1972, archaeologists found 16,642 clay tablets. The tablets have been dated back to about 2,300 BC. There are several cities mentioned on these tablets that are also mentioned in the Bible, such as Adma, Zeboim, Zoar, Damascus, Jerusalem, Carchemish, Dor, Hazor, Megiddo, Lachish, Gaza, Sinai, Joppa, Harran, Ashdod, and, the ones I find the most interesting: Sodom and Gomorrah. These two cities have never been located — because as we read in Genesis, God destroyed them. Yet we know that they really existed because they are mentioned in the tablets discovered in Ebla. Evidently, Ebla had a trading enterprise with Sodom and Gomorrah. The tablets also confirm the existence of the Assyrians, the Hittites, and the Canaanites. More detail can be found in a book by Dr. Clifford Wilson titled *The Ebla Tablets*. There was also an article concerning Ebla in *Time Magazine* on Oct. 18, 1976.

The Book of Mormon is allegedly about a people of Jewish descent that migrated to North America before Christ. We find this in L.D.S Scripture, "The Pearl of Great Price" (*Joseph Smith History* 1:3 and 34; also known as *Joseph Smith 2*, 1:3 and 34.[E]) All other references are in L.D.S Scripture the *Book of Mormon* [E] These people supposedly grew into a great nation. There were so many people that they spread out upon the face of the land. These people had buildings, machinery, and metals including steel. (Jarom 1:8).They had all manner of tools (Ether 10:25). They had silks, gold, silver, horses, and various other animals, including elephants (Ether 9:16-19). There were so many people they could be found from coast to coast (Helaman 3:8). They had wars where as many as 10,000 people died in a single battle (Mormon 6:11). Not only were there people from coast to coast, but there were buildings as well. (Mormon 1:7). The people built ships, Temples, synagogues, and more (Helaman 3:14). The people had a monetary system, which included lots of different types of coins (Alma 11:4-19). It is hard to imagine that a people that were spread from coast to coast, and who built ships, buildings, machinery, and so forth — could simply disappear and not leave any trace. Not one archaeological discovery has ever been linked directly to the contents of the *Book of Mormon*. The Smithsonian Institute even states that the American Indians did not have horses. Silk and steel were not used in the New World before 1492.

Following is an excerpt from *Encyclopedia of Mormonism*, Vol.1, listing for "Archaeology": "Archaeological data from the ancient Near East and the Americas have been used both to support and to discredit the *Book of Mormon*. Many scholars see no support for the *Book of Mormon* in the archaeological records, since no one has found any inscriptional evidence for, or material remains that can be tied directly to, any of the persons, places, or things mentioned in the book (Smithsonian Institution)".[E10]

Table of Contents pg 1, 2, 3, 4

Another reason to question the historical accuracy of the *Book of Mormon* is a discrepancy between its information and that of the Bible (which, remember, has already been verified archaeologically), The Bible declares that Jesus was to be born in Bethlehem (Micah 5:2, Matthew 2:1); but the *Book of Mormon* says that Jesus' birth would be at Jerusalem (Alma 7:10).

Topic Index

Be able to show evidence of past fulfillment of its prophecies (the prophetic messages should not be proven false).

The Bible contains hundreds of prophecies, some of which are yet regarding the future — and many of which have already have been proven to be true. In addition, the Bible has never been proven wrong in any of its prophetic messages. Here is one example of a prophetic message which came true.

> Isaiah 44:28-45:1:*"It is I who says of Cyrus, 'He is My shepherd! And he will perform all My desire.' And he declares of Jerusalem, 'She will be built,' and of the temple, 'Your foundation will be laid.' Thus says the LORD to Cyrus His anointed, whom I have taken by the right hand, to subdue nations before him, and to loose the loins of kings; to open doors before him so that gates will not be shut."*

Note that Cyrus is mentioned by name, although at this point he has not even been born. What's also interesting about this prophetic message is that at the time Isaiah wrote this, the city was not yet destroyed and the temple was still standing. Nebuchadnezzar, the king of Babylon, came along and destroyed the city about a hundred years later. About 160 years after Isaiah's writing the temple was completed, because a Persian king named Cyrus gave the decree to rebuild the city and the temple. *The American Peoples Encyclopedia*, Vol.11, (page 395) dates the time of Isaiah's death at about **668 BC**. The same volume on page 611 states that Nebuchadnezzar destroyed the city and the temple in**586 BC**. In Vol. 6 (pages 688-689) of *The American Peoples Encyclopedia*, we find that Cyrus liberated the Jews and allowed them to return to rebuild Jerusalem and even restored sacred vessels taken from the temple. This took place around **539 BC;** the new temple was completed in **515 BC** (Vol.11, page 611). [A17]

In all fairness I cannot say that I am familiar with any proven false prophecies within the *Book of Mormon* itself. However, there is also no evidence to support that the people or places written about in the *Book of Mormon* ever existed. There are no ancient manuscripts for the *Book of Mormon*. There is no archaeological confirmation of anything in the *Book of Mormon*. We are left pretty much taking Joseph Smith's word for everything. Joseph Smith made numerous prophecies that are recorded in other books which *can* be proven false. One example can be found in the *Doctrine and Covenants*, Section 84:1-5.[E] There Smith prophesied that a temple would be built in the western boundaries in the state of Missouri, and dedicated by his own hand during the generation of those living in 1832.

Table of Contents pg 1, 2, 3, 4

The Mormons failed to build such a temple during Joseph Smith's lifetime, making him a false prophet. According to the Bible, a true prophet of God must be correct 100 percent of the time. This is because God is the one who causes a truly God-given prophecy to come to pass (Deuteronomy 18:18-22, Ezekiel 12:22-25, Habakkuk 2:2-3).

Topic Index

5) Be scientifically sound.

Most informed Christians will readily admit the Bible is not a science textbook. While the Bible cannot be proven to be the Word of God based solely on science — neither does science refute the Bible. They are in harmony in areas where they do meet. But, the Bible was written to reveal God to mankind, not science. I would like to mention one area where science and the Bible do meet together. Consider Job 26:7: "He stretches out the north over empty space, and hangs the earth on nothing." Keep in mind that Job lived almost 2,000 years before Christ. This idea that the earth was suspended on nothing was not even considered by scientists for thousands of years *after* Job. Now, with our satellites and trips into space, we know this to be true. But this was not known in Job's day. The Egyptians declared the earth rested on pillars. The Greeks said it was carried on the back of Atlas. People believed many things, but they did not come close to what we know to be true today, and what Job declared a few thousand years ago.

DNA studies now reveal that the *Book of Mormon* is incorrect in its claim that the Israelites are the main ancestors of modern day Native Americans. In 2003, Living Hope Ministries produced a 49-minute documentary that uses genetic research to challenge fundamental historical claims in the *Book of Mormon*: “DNA vs. the *Book of Mormon*” (written by Joel P. Kramer, directed by Joel P. Kramer and Jeremy Reyes [H1]). An internet search of this title will produce many options for those interested in purchasing this video.

Topic Index

Be able to prove claims of ancient text and verify its transmission of the text to be accurate;

It is natural to question how we know that what we have in our Bible today is the same as what was originally written. Many people make the mistake of assuming that errors have crept in during the transmission of the text. For example, the Mormons’“8th Article of Faith” states: "We believe the Bible to be the word of God in so far as it is translated correctly; we also believe the *Book of Mormon* to be the word of God". Mormons teach that the Catholic Church has perverted much of the Bible, ignoring an abundance of manuscript evidence, some of which pre-dates the Catholic Church.

Table of Contents pg 1, 2, 3, 4

We need to remember that the Bible was originally written in Greek and Hebrew — not English. Many have wondered why there are so many versions of the Bible: because when translating a book from one language to another, scholars will differ slightly on word choice and sentence structure. Also, the English language itself has evolved since the King James Version of the Bible was produced. We simply do not talk in King James' style any longer. When comparing the many different versions, however, we find the message and doctrines are the same in all of the legitimate translations.

Since our English Bibles are translated from original languages of Greek and Hebrew, let's narrow focus to that. How do we know that the Greek and Hebrew did not change as it was passed down through time, before we translated it into English? This is where manuscript evidence becomes important. There is far more manuscript evidence to support the writings of the Bible than any other ancient history that is known in the world today. There are more than 5,300 known Greek manuscripts for the New Testament. This is more than enough to compare to our Greek text today. There is also further confirmation from the 10,000 manuscripts of the Latin Vulgate. If this was not enough, there are 9,300 earlier manuscripts. Even without all of this evidence, the vast majority of the New Testament could be reconstructed from the writings of the early church fathers. These are the men who studied directly under the Apostles, and the people two studied under them. They did a lot of writing quoting the Apostles. It is true that textual variances can be found in these manuscripts. The vast majority of these discrepancies concern minor things, such as spelling. **None** of the discrepancies change anything in the teachings or message of the Bible.

We do not have a large number of manuscripts for the Old Testament like we do the New Testament. There are two reasons for this. First, the further back you go, the more things are destroyed by a natural aging. Second, the people themselves destroyed any copy of the Old Testament that was not perfect. To them, the copying of the text was extremely sacred. There was a ritual that had to be followed in every detail. If the columns were not of equal size throughout the manuscript, the entire copy was destroyed. One of the greatest proofs of the reliability of the Old Testament is the Dead Sea Scrolls, which were discovered in 1947. These scrolls contained a portion of every book in the Old Testament with the exception of Esther. The entire book of Isaiah was found here also. When examined, these scrolls confirmed that the Hebrew text we have today has not changed from that of antiquity. It is also important to realize that these scrolls date back to before the time when Jesus Christ was here. Jesus seemed to view the text they had as accurate. Consider the following passages spoken by Jesus.

> Matthew 5:18: "For truly I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, not the smallest letter or stroke shall pass away from the Law, until all is accomplished."
>
> Luke 24:25:"And He said to them, 'O foolish men and slow of heart to believe in all that the prophets have spoken!'"

In both cases Jesus was referring to the written Old Testament. His statements certainly showed that He believed their text to be reliable. The Dead Sea Scrolls date back before Jesus' time, which has proven our Hebrew text today is the same. Certainly since we have the same Hebrew text that they had in Jesus' day, we also should consider it reliable.

There is no known ancient manuscript that shows evidence for the *Book of Mormon*. Joseph Smith claimed to have translated it from some gold plates which, conveniently, disappeared — and there is no other proof. The earliest copy of the *Book of Mormon* known is from the 1800s. Comparing the *Book of Mormon* today to the *Book of Mormon* of the 1800s, nearly 4,000 changes can be shown. Some of them are minor textual changes, while others change meaning and doctrine. More information and where to purchase this book can be found at utlm.org Topic Index

7) Be life-changing in its message.

There are those who claim the name of Christianity and then do awful things, even in the name of God. Still, one cannot deny that millions of people have changed their lives after accepting the Gospel message of the Bible. We cannot discount the many that are genuine just because there are also some counterfeits.

There are also many Mormons who have changed their lives for the better. I was raised in an active Mormon family and I can testify to their sincerity. Those who follow their religion are good people who deserve respect and admiration. The statement, "There is truth in all religions", is true to some extent. Non-believers who practice some moral teachings from the Bible will certainly live better lives than if they did not. And while the Mormon Church also teaches and practices some good principles, those principles will not get anyone into heaven. We are not saved on the basis of good deeds, but by God's grace, because of what Jesus did on the cross (John 3:16, Ephesians 2:8-10). A person can be very sincere and still be wrong (Proverbs 14:12). The Mormon Church does teach some good Biblical principles, but it does not teach the same God, Jesus, or salvation that we find in the Bible. We need to remember that people who are deceived and mislead are not the enemy.

Ephesians 6:12: "For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places." We need to speak out against false doctrines, remembering that the people deceived by them are also people who Jesus died for.

Table of Contents pg 1, 2, 3, 4

The Book of Daniel and Prophecy
Part 1, Dating the Book of Daniel

The Bible claims to be the Word of God. In the Bible we are constantly confronted by words that indicate certain text is “the word of the Lord”, or the claim that “God said” something. One of the purposes of prophecy is so that we become confronted with the reality of God. In Scripture we are often told of something that will take place at some future time; then the prophecy is followed by "you will know that I am the LORD." It is not unreasonable to wonder; “How do we know God really said this?” The sure fulfillment of the prophecy is given to us as one of the means in which we should test a prophet to see if he is indeed speaking God's words.

> *Deuteronomy 18:21-22: "And you may say in your heart, 'How shall we know the word which the LORD has not spoken?' **When a prophet speaks in the name of the LORD, if the thing does not come about or come true, that is the thing which the LORD has not spoken**. The prophet has spoken it presumptuously; you shall not be afraid of him.”*

Another test of a prophet: if someone tells us to follow after other gods, he is a false prophet (Deuteronomy 13:1-4.)

Fulfilled prophecy not only confronts us with the reality of God, but it also gives us confirmation that the Bible really is the Word of God, as it claims to be. I, for one, am glad that Christianity is not a "blind faith”. Although we do use faith, there are also sound reasons to accept the Bible as the written word of God.

Topic Index

LATE DATING THE BOOK OF DANIEL

When it comes to prophecy many people try to claim that a fulfilled prophecy was written after the actual event. This is called “late dating”. They do this simply because they do not believe in a God that can forecast the future. The Book of Daniel is well-known for its prophecy, which accurately foretold events that later took place in history, and goes on to tell us of events that will still take place in our future and tie in directly with the Book of Revelation concerning end times and the return of the Lord Jesus Christ. Unfortunately some scholars put inaccurate information which is based only on their biased opinion into reference works. According to *Baker Encyclopedia of Christian Apologetics* late dating the Book of Daniel did not start due to some archaeological discovery or historical fact, but rather it was late dated because certain scholars did not believe in miracles. [A35] Daniel foretold the future accurately, which is miraculous; therefore they assumed a later date.

Table of Contents pg 1, 2, 3, 4

While reading, remember that on historical timeline, numbers or dates get larger the farther back you go: BC 600, 500, 400, 300, 200, 100, 1, 100, 200, 300 AD. Following is an example in which the *Grolier Multimedia Encyclopedia* has a problem with the dates.

> "Daniel, a book in the Old Testament of the BIBLE, is listed with the Major Prophets by Christians and with the Writings (Ketuvim) by the Jews. It comprises six stories of the trials of Daniel and his companions while they served at the court of Babylon, as well as four visions of the end of the world. The book takes its name, not from the author, who is actually unknown, but from its hero, a 6th-century Jew. Internal evidence indicates that the book was writen during the Maccabean wars (167-164 BC)." G1

Topic Index

The *"Internal evidence"* that most people use to support late-dating the Book of Daniel is that Daniel wrote about things in the future that he could not possibly know — but God can foretell the future. As we will see next in the *Grolier Multimedia Encyclopedia* excerpt, it is not possible for the book of Daniel to have been written during the Maccabean wars (167-164 BC).

> "**The Septuagint,** commonly designated LXX, is the oldest Greek version of the Old Testament of the BIBLE, the title "seventy" referring to the tradition that it was the work of 70 translators (or 72 in some traditions). The translation was made from the Hebrew Bible by Hellenistic Jews during the period 275-100 BC at Alexandria." G1

The problem with this theory is that in the latter of the two dates there is a 108 year gap (275 BC 167 BC = 108 years). This would result in the Book of Daniel being translated from Hebrew to Greek 108 years before the book was actually written. Even if we say that Daniel was not written until 167-164 BC, as Grolier's earlier excerpt suggests, we would still have a problem. The Septuagint is only a translation of older Hebrew manuscripts. This means that the book of Daniel has to pre-date the Septuagint, thus making the dating as found for the Book of Daniel in *Grolier Multimedia Encyclopedia* inaccurate. At best one would have to argue that Daniel was written in 167 BC and then translated into the Septuagint in 100 BC, only sixty-seven years later. It is very unlikely that the Jews were fooled into accepting the Book of Daniel as authoritative, with Daniel as the author, if the book had not even existed sixty-eight years earlier — and why would they bother translating the book from Hebrew to Greek if it was not accepted as an authoritative work?

Table of Contents pg 1, 2, 3, 4

Topic Index

Flavius Josephus was a Jewish historian who lived AD 37–100. In Chapter 10 of *The Works of Josephus* we read the following:

> "(186) But now Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, took some of the most noble of the Jews that were children, and the kinsmen of Zedekiah their king, such as were remarkable for their beauty of their bodies and comeliness of their countenances, and delivered them into the hands of tutors, and to the improvement to be made by them. He also made some of them to be eunuchs; (187) which course he took also with those of other nations whom he had taken in the flower of their age and afforded them their diet from his own table, and had them instructed in the institutes of the country, and taught the learning of the Chaldeans; and they had now exercised themselves sufficiently in that wisdom which he had ordered they should apply themselves to. (188) Now among these there were four of the family of Zedekiah, of most excellent dispositions, the one of whom was called Daniel, another was called Ananias, another Misael, and the fourth Azarias: and the king of Babylon changed their names, and commanded that they should make use of other names. (189) Daniel he called Baltasar; Ananias, Shadrach; Misael, Meshach; and Azarias, Abednego." D2 (See Daniel 1:1-7.) **(PDF pg. 400)**

Notice that this early historian places Daniel in the reign of Nebuchadnezzar. Furthermore he gives an account of Daniel and his friends having their names changed by the king. This account is the same as the one we find in the Book of Daniel, indicating that the Biblical account is historically accurate. The reign of Nebuchadnezzar was not 167-164 BC when we are told that the book of Daniel was written. The reign of Nebuchadnezzar was approximately 561 BC - 605 BC. Are we to really to believe that less than a hundred years after the Maccabean wars this Jewish historian inaccurately placed Daniel in the reign of Nebuchadnezzar?

Topic Index

Does Josephus have any credibility as a historian? Grolier's seems to think so:

Grolier Multimedia Encyclopedia

> **"Flavius Josephus**, b. AD 37, d. after 93, was a Jewish historian whose works are invaluable sources for the history of the Jews under Roman domination. A Pharisee, originally named Joseph ben Matthias, he reluctantly joined the revolt against Rome in AD 66 and served as commander in Galilee until captured by the Romans in 67. Through the patronage of Vespasian, he later became a Roman citizen. Josephus's *The Jewish War* (75-79), a description of the tragic events of the revolt, is based to a large extent on his firsthand knowledge. His *Jewish Antiquities* (93), although covering the history of the Jews from the Creation on, gives a particularly full account of the Maccabees and the dynasty of Herod. Josephus has been criticized for his subservience to the Romans, but he was a passionate defender of Jewish religion and culture, as shown in his apologia entitled Against Apion as well as in his historical works." G1

Table of Contents pg 1, 2, 3, 4

Josephus also makes reference to the Book of Daniel in another account from *The Works of Josephus, The Antiquities of the Jews* (Book 11, Chapter 8, #4-5):

> "4. (321) But Sanballat thought he had now gotten a proper opportunity to make his attempt, so he renounced Darius, and taking with him seven thousand of his own subjects, he came to Alexander; and finding him beginning the siege of Tyre, he said to him, that he delivered up to him these men who came out of places under his dominion, and did gladly accept of him for their lord instead of Darius." D2 **(PDF pg. 438)**

In this context we can see that this is Alexander the Great. Then following the context down we read the following:

> "(337) **And when the book of Daniel was showed him, wherein Daniel declared that one of the Greeks should destroy the empire of the Persians, he supposed that himself was the person intended**;" **(PDF pg. 439)**

Considering that Josephus was a Jewish Historian it is very unlikely that he would have been fooled into believing that the Book of Daniel existed at the time of Alexander the Great; if in fact it was only written a hundred years or so earlier. It seems even more unlikely that he would be foolish enough to try to tell his readers of this account if he knew the book of Daniel did not exist at the time of Alexander the Great. This puts the Book of Daniel as already being completed and accepted about 200 years earlier than the date when it was supposed to have been written according to *Grolier's*. Alexander the Great was born around 356 BC and *Grolier's* dated the Book of Daniel as 167-164 BC.

Grolier's Multimedia Encyclopedia

> "**Alexander the Great, King of Macedonia.** Alexander III, king of Macedonia, the first king to be called "the Great", conquered the Persian empire and annexed it to Macedonia. The son of PHILLIP II and OLYMPIAS, he was born in 356 BC and brought up as crown prince." G1

Topic Index

We know that the Book of Daniel was not written during the Maccabean wars (167-164 BC) as the *Grolier's Multimedia Encyclopedia* declares. We know this because the Hebrew manuscripts containing the Book of Daniel are proven older than that date by the dating of the Septuagint. Furthermore the early historian Josephus, who is considered an accurate source of information on the Jews and their religion, dates Daniel in the reign of Nebuchadnezzar. **The reign of Nebuchadnezzar was approximately 561 BC - 605 BC.**

Table of Contents pg 1, 2, 3, 4

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> "**Nebuchadnezzar II** (b. c. 630 – d. c. 561 BC), the second and greatest king of the Chaldean dynasty of Babylonia (**reigned c. 605-c. – 561 BC**). He was known for his military might, the splendour of his capital, Babylon, and his important part in Jewish history." G3

Topic Index

Daniel is also mentioned in the Book of Ezekiel:

> Ezekiel 14:12-16: "Then the word of the LORD came to me saying, 'Son of man, if a country sins against Me by committing unfaithfulness, and I stretch out My hand against it, destroy its supply of bread, send famine against it, and cut off from it both man and beast, even though these three men, Noah**, Daniel**, and Job were in its midst, by their own righteousness they could only deliver themselves,' declares the Lord GOD. 'If I were to cause wild beasts to pass through the land, and they depopulated it, and it became desolate so that no one would pass through it because of the beasts, though these three men were in its midst, as I live,' declares the Lord GOD, 'they could not deliver either their sons or their daughters. They alone would be delivered, but the country would be desolate.'"

Since Daniel is mentioned in the Book of Ezekiel in a non prophetic context it is reasonable to believe that Daniel must have been around before or during Ezekiel's lifetime. And when did Ezekiel live?

Encyclopaedia Britannica, Copyright 1994-1998

> "**Ezekiel** also spelled EZECHIEL, Hebrew YEHEZQEL (fl. **early 6th century BC**), prophet-priest of ancient Israel and the subject and in part the author of an Old Testament book that bears his name." G3

Topic Index

The Christian who accepts the Bible as the Word of God need only to look to the words of Jesus for confirmation. Jesus not only referred to Daniel as a prophet, but also made reference to what is found in the Book of Daniel. If Jesus accepts Daniel as a prophet and the Book of Daniel as prophecy, then the Christian has no reason to reject it.

> Matthew 24:15-16: "Therefore when you see the abomination of desolation which was spoken of through Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place (let the reader understand), then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains.

> Daniel 9:27: "And he will make a firm covenant with the many for one week, but in the middle of the week he will put a stop to sacrifice and grain offering; and on the wing of abominations will come one who makes desolate, even until a complete destruction, one that is decreed, is poured out on the one who makes desolate."

Table of Contents pg 1, 2, 3, 4

> Daniel 12:11: "And from the time that the regular sacrifice is abolished, and the abomination of desolation is set up, there will be 1,290 days."

The Apostle Paul also makes reference to this.

> II Thessalonians 2:3-4: "Let no one in any way deceive you, for it will not come unless the apostasy comes first, and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the son of destruction, who opposes and exalts himself above every so-called god or object of worship, so that he takes his seat in the temple of God, displaying himself as being God."

Topic Index

There are, of course, reference works that do date the book of Daniel correctly. Unfortunately among the many reference works, such references seem to be in the minority.

Webster's Family Encyclopedia, 1989 edition, vol.3, pg. 717:

> "**Daniel** (6th century BC). An Old Testament prophet and Jewish exile in Babylon. **The Book of Daniel** is credited to him although some believe it to have been written in the 2nd century BC. The first six chapters tell of various mainly supernatural episodes involving Daniel and his companions under King Nebuchadnezzar and Belshazzar. The remaining six chapters are mostly apocaplyptic visions concerning the future of the Jews." [A34]

Note that *Webster's Family Encyclopedia* acknowledges that some believe Daniel was written in the 2nd century BC, but still dates Daniel in the 6th century BC.

Easton's Bible Dictionary:

> "**Daniel, Book of** is ranked by the Jews in that division of their Bible called the Hagiographa (Heb. Khethubim). (See BIBLE.) It consists of two distinct parts. The first part, consisting of the first six chapters, is chiefly historical; and the second part, consisting of the remaining six chapters, is chiefly prophetical.
>
> "The historical part of the book treats of the period of the Captivity. Daniel is the historian of the Captivity, the writer who alone furnishes any series of events for that dark and dismal period during which the harp of Israel hung on the trees that grew by the Euphrates. His narrative may be said in general to intervene between Kings and Chronicles on the one hand and Ezra on the other, or (more strictly) to fill out the sketch which the author of the Chronicles gives in a single verse in his last chapter: 'And them that had escaped from the sword carried he [i.e., Nebuchadnezzar] away to Babylon; where they were servants to him and his sons until the reign of the kingdom of Persia (2 Chronicles 36:20).

Table of Contents pg 1, 2, 3, 4

> "The prophetical part consists of three visions and one lengthened prophetical communication.
>
> "The genuineness of this book has been much disputed, but the arguments in its favour fully establish its claims. (1.) We have the testimony of Christ (Matthew. 24:15; 25:31; 26:64) and his apostles (1 Corinthians 6:2; 2 Thessalonians 2:3) for its authority; and (2) the important testimony of Ezekiel (14:14, 20; 28:3). (3.) The character and records of the book are also entirely in harmony with the times and circumstances in which the author lived. (4.) The linguistic character of the book is, moreover, just such as might be expected. Certain portions (Daniel 2:4; 7) are written in the Chaldee language; and the portions written in Hebrew are in a style and form having a close affinity with the later books of the Old Testament, especially with that of Ezra. The writer is familiar both with the Hebrew and the Chaldee, passing from the one to the other just as his subject required. This is in strict accordance with the position of the author and of the people for whom his book was written. That Daniel is the writer of this book is also testified to in the book itself (7:1, 28; 8:2; 9:2; 10:1, 2; 12:4, 5)." [E36]

Topic Index

I would like to further emphasize the importance of Daniel claiming to be the author. We find references where Daniel speaks as though he is the author:

Daniel 8:15: "And it came about when I, Daniel, had seen the vision, that I sought to understand it; and behold, standing before me was one who looked like a man."

Daniel 8:27: "Then I, Daniel, was exhausted and sick for days. Then I got up again and carried on the king's business; but I was astounded at the vision, and there was none to explain it."

Daniel 9:2: "...in the first year of his reign I, Daniel, observed in the books the number of the years which was revealed as the word of the LORD to Jeremiah the prophet for the completion of the desolations of Jerusalem, namely, seventy years."

Daniel 10:2: "In those days I, Daniel, had been mourning for three entire weeks."

Daniel 10:7: "Now I, Daniel, alone saw the vision, while the men who were with me did not see the vision; nevertheless, a great dread fell on them, and they ran away to hide themselves."

Daniel 12:5: "Then I, Daniel, looked and behold, two others were standing, one on this bank of the river, and the other on that bank of the river."

The author says "I Daniel" this informs us that the author is Daniel himself, and not someone else. Furthermore the author dates himself in certain passages. Following is one such example:

> Daniel 7:1-2 and 28: "(1) In the first year of Belshazzar king of Babylon, Daniel saw a dream and visions in his mind as he lay on his bed; then he wrote the dream down and related the following summary of it. (2) Daniel said, 'I was looking in my vision by night, and behold, the four winds of heaven were stirring up the great sea.'" (following the context down we read) ....."(28) At this point the revelation ended. As for me, Daniel, my thoughts were greatly alarming me and my face grew pale, but I kept the matter to myself."

Notice the author claims that Daniel had a dream or vision in the first year of Belshazzar king of Babylon. Then the author speaks as Daniel himself. My point is that the author gives us every indication that he is Daniel and writing during the time period of which he is speaking. Belshazzar is dated around 539 BC.

Encarta Encyclopedia 2000, copyright 1993-1999 Microsoft ref

> "**Belshazzar** — Belshazzar (550?-539? BC), in the Old Testament, Babylonian prince mentioned in Daniel 5 as the last Chaldean king of Babylon." G4

*Enclopaedia Britanica***,** Multimedia CD 98:

> "**Belshazzar**, Neo Babylonian BEL-SHAR-USAR, Greek BALTASAR, or BALTHASAR (d. c. 539 BC), coregent of Babylon who was killed at the capture of the city by the Persians. Belshazzar had been known only from the biblical Book of Daniel (chapters 5, 7-8) and from Xenophon's Cycropaedia until 1854, when references to him were found in Babylonian cunieform inscriptions." G3

If Daniel did not write the Book of Daniel during the time period indicated then it is a deception on the part of the author. The author would be a fraud who deceived Josephus the Jewish historian, as well as Jesus himself. Remember Jesus reminded the disciples what was spoken of by Daniel the prophet. (Matthew 24:15-16). If the writer actually lived during the 2nd century BC and wrote as if he was Daniel, who lived during the reign of Belshazzar, then he would not be a prophet, but rather he would be a liar and a fraud. Jesus refers to Daniel as a prophet. Josephus also would not be much of a historian to fail to recognize this fraud.

Table of Contents pg 1, 2, 3, 4

Topic Index

SUMMARY

The following reasoning has been discussed showing that the Book of Daniel was not written during the Maccabean wars (167-164 BC), but during the 6th century BC.

The Septuagint, which is a Greek Translation of the older Hebrew manuscripts, was translated 275-100 BC. (a) The Book of Daniel could not have been translated from one language to another until it was actually written. (b) This is not enough time for the Jews to accept a recent fraud as an ancient authoritative work.

Josephus was an early historian who is said to have credibility and his works are invaluable sources for the history of the Jews. Josephus places the person Daniel in the reign of Nebuchadnezzar (605 -561 BC). In this reference Josephus gives an account of Daniel and his friends having their names changed by the king. This reference from Josephus correlates with what we find in the Book of Daniel.

Josephus also makes reference to the Book of Daniel as being complete and already accepted during the time period of Alexander the Great who was born in 356 BC.

Daniel is mentioned in the Book of Ezekiel, which is dated the 6th century BC.

Jesus called Daniel a prophet and made a reference to what is written in the Book of Daniel. The Apostle Paul also makes a reference to what is revealed in the Book of Daniel.

There are reference works that accept the dating of Daniel as 6th century BC as well as the genuineness of the book itself. Two references were given: (a) *Webster's Family Encyclopedia* (b) *Easton's Bible Dictionary.*

The linguistic character of the book is as might be expected. Certain portions (Daniel 2:4; 7) are written in the Chaldee language; and the portions written in Hebrew are in a style and form having a close affinity with the later books of the Old Testament, especially with that of Ezra.

That Daniel is the writer of this book is also testified to in the book itself (Daniel 7:1-2, 28; 8:2; 15; 27, 9:2; 10:1, 2; 7 12:4, 5).

Table of Contents pg 1, 2, 3, 4

Daniel did indeed live in the 6th century BC. His predictions concerning the Medes and the Persians taking over Babylon followed by the Greeks conquering the Medes and the Persians are remarkable. These predictions only scratch the surface of the predictions in the Book of Daniel. Nostradamus and Jean Dixon together could not match the detail or accuracy as found in the Book of Daniel. How is this possible? It is because as Daniel says “there is a God in heaven who reveals mysteries" (Daniel 2:28). Some of Daniel's prophecy is covered in “Daniel Part 2” of this book,

Topic Index

INTERESTING QUOTATIONS

Isaiah 40:8: “The grass withers, the flower fades, but the word of our God stands forever.”

Isaiah 46:10: “Declaring the end from the beginning and from ancient times things which have not been done, saying, 'My purpose will be established, and I will accomplish all My good pleasure...”

Time Magazine **(Dec. 30, 1974):** "After more than two centuries of facing the heaviest scientific guns that could be brought to bear, the bible has survived and perhaps better for the siege even on the critics own terms. Historical fact, the scriptures seem more acceptable now than they did when the rationalist began the attack" [B1]

Sir Isaac Newton: "...to reject Daniel is to reject the Christian religion"

Table of Contents pg 1, 2, 3, 4

The Book of Daniel and Prophecy
Part 2, World History Told In Advance

In Daniel Part 1 we covered evidence for the dating of the book of Daniel. Daniel was written in the 6th century BC. The reign of Nebuchadnezzar, under whom Daniel served in the first part of the Book of Daniel, was approximately 561 BC - 605 BC.

The Bible tells us that God has control over kings and governments. God can take governments out or replace them at anytime that He chooses.

Now we will take a look at some of the prophecy of Daniel and how it was fulfilled in history. There is far more detailed prophecy in Daniel then what will be dealt with here. This is only a small taste of what can be found in Daniel. Hopefully this will whet your taste buds for wanting to study more prophecy yourself. This prophecy in the second chapter of Daniel continues even into our future and end times. For our purposes we will only be dealing with those parts that have already come to pass. Some key passages are printed here for you. However, it would be to the reader's benefit to read each chapter in Daniel before reading the commentary here.

In the beginning of Daniel we find that Nebuchadnezzar is king of Babylon. It is interesting to note that Nebuchadnezzar is king because God has placed him there. In the Bible we can see that God not only can forecast the future, but also controls the future.

> Jeremiah 28:14: "For thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel, 'I have put a yoke of iron on the neck of all these nations, that they may serve Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylong, and they shall serve him. And I have also given him the beasts of the field."

Daniel speaking to Nebuchadnezzar said in Daniel 2:37: "You, O king, are the king of kings, to whom the God of heaven has given the kingdom, the power, the strength, and the glory."

Topic Index

(Read Daniel Chapter 2.) In Daniel Chapter 2 we find that King Nebuchadnezzar had a dream. He told his wise men that they must tell him both the dream he had and the interpretation. Daniel was the only one who could do this after seeking God in prayer. Following is Daniel's response to the king.

> Daniel 2:31-40: **31** "You, O king, were looking and behold, there was a single great statue; that statue, which was large and of extraordinary splendor, was standing in front of you, and its appearance was awesome. **32** The head of that statue was made of fine gold, its breast and its arms of silver, its belly and its thighs of bronze, **33** its legs of iron, its feet partly of iron and partly of clay. **34** You continued looking until a stone was cut out without hands, and it struck the statue on its feet of iron and clay, and crushed them.

> **35** "Then the iron, the clay, the bronze, the silver and the gold were crushed all at the same time, and became like chaff from the summer threshing floors; and the wind carried them away so that not a trace of them was found. But the stone that struck the statue became a great mountain and filled the whole earth. **36** This was the dream; now we shall tell its interpretation before the king. **37** You, O king, are the king of kings, to whom the God of heaven has given the kingdom, the power, the strength, and the glory; **38** and wherever the sons of men dwell, or the beasts of the field, or the birds of the sky, He has given them into your hand and has caused you to rule over them all. You are the head of gold. **39** And after you there will arise another kingdom inferior to you, then another third kingdom of bronze, which will rule over all the earth. **40** Then there will be a fourth kingdom as strong as iron; inasmuch as iron crushes and shatters all things, so, like iron that breaks in pieces, it will crush and break all these in pieces."

God was not revealing spiritual truth to Nebuchadnezzar; rather He was showing him what would take place in history concerning himself and the governing authorities after him. Later in Daniel Chapter 4 we find that Nebuchadnezzar has his sanity taken from him until he recognizes God as the one in authority.

We learn in this passage that the dream that was given to King Nebuchadnezzar was about future kingdoms. In this dream he saw a large image and we are told Nebuchadnezzar was the head of gold (verse 38). Following him there are three other kingdoms mentioned (verses 39-40).

Topic Index

We do not have to guess as to the interpretation of this prophecy. Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon was the head of gold. Following him are three other kingdoms. As for the second kingdom in king Nebuchadnezzar's dream we are only told (verse 39) "And after you there will arise another kingdom inferior to you" This inferior kingdom is represented as the breast and arms of silver in the dream. (verse 32): "The head of that statue was made of fine gold, its breast and its arms of silver, its belly and its thighs of bronze..." Further interpretation as to the identity of this second kingdom can be found later in the book of Daniel. **However Isaiah actually tells us who will overthrow Babylon at least a hundred years before the writing of the book of Daniel**. Remember, Daniel was written in the 6th century BC. The reign of Nebuchadnezzar was approximately 561 BC - 605 BC. (While reading don't forget that on the timeline numbers or dates get larger the farther back you go — BC 600, 500, 400, 300, 200, 100, 1, 100, 200, 300 AD.)

Webster's Family Encyclopedia, 1989 edition, Volume 6, pg. 1329:

> **"Isaiah**, (8th century BC) Old Testament Prophet. He was influential at the court of the rulers of Judah until the Assyrian invasion (701 BC) and. according to tradition, was later martyred." A34

Table of Contents pg 1, 2, 3, 4

> Isaiah 13:17-20: **17** Behold, I am going to stir up the Medes against them, who will not value silver or take pleasure in gold, **18** And their bows will mow down the young men, they will not even have compassion on the fruit of the womb, nor will their eye pity children. **19** And Babylon, the beauty of kingdoms, the glory of the Chaldeans' pride, will be as when God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah. **20** It will never be inhabited or lived in from generation to generation; nor will the Arab pitch his tent there, nor will shepherds make their flocks lie down there.

Daniel was written in the 6th century BC. The reign of Nebuchadnezzar, whom Daniel served under in the first part of the book of Daniel, was approximately 561 BC - **605 BC**. *Webster's Family Encyclopedia* gives us the date **701 BC** as the later part of Isaiah's ministry (701 BC - 605 BC = 96 years).[A34] Keep in mind that the Medes and the Persians took over after Nebuchadnezzar. **This means that approximately a hundred years before Daniel God told his people through Isaiah that the Medes would rise up against Babylon**. We will soon see that Babylon will be destroyed as Sodom and Gomorrah and will never be inhabited again.

Topic Index

Daniel Chapter 4 is the last we see of King Nebuchadnezzar. In the beginning of Daniel Chapter 5 we are introduced to Belshazzar. In my study I found that some have questioned Daniel because Belshazzar is said to be the son of Nebuchadnezzar (Daniel 5:22). I will explain this before we go on to the fulfillment of prophecy. The Aramaic word translated "father" here does not necessarily mean *immediate* father. It can also mean grandfather or an ancestor, as shown in the following Hebrew\ Aramaic reference works.

Strong's Definitions of Biblical Words

'ab (Aramaic) (ab); KJV — father.

corresponding to **1:** 'ab (awb); a primitive word; father, in a literal and immediate, or figurative and remote application):

KJV-- chief, (fore-) father ([-less]), X patrimony, principal. Compare names in "Abi-".[C3]

Brown, Driver, Briggs Lexicon

'ab-

the father of an individual

used of God as Father of His people

the head or the founder of a household, a group, a family, or a clan

an ancestor

a grandfather, the forefathers --of a person

used of people (in general) [C7]

Table of Contents pg 1, 2, 3, 4

These references show that the word translated as "father" in the following passage can also mean a grandfather or descendant.

> Daniel 5:2: "When Belshazzar tasted the wine, he gave orders to bring the gold and silver vessels which Nebuchadnezzar his **father** had taken out of the temple which was in Jerusalem, in order that the king and his nobles, his wives, and his concubines might drink from them."

This same Aramaic word is translated as "fathers" speaking of ancestors in the following passage.

> Ezra 5:12: "But because our fathers had provoked the God of heaven to wrath, He gave them into the hand of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, the Chaldean, who destroyed this temple and deported the people to Babylon."

We find further indication that the passage in Daniel 5:2 is speaking of a descendant of Nebuchadnezzar, rather than an immediate son, in the book of Jeremiah.

> Jeremiah 27:6-7 "And now I have given all these lands into the hand of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, My servant, and I have given him also the wild animals of the field to serve him. And all the nations shall serve him, and his son, and his grandson, until the time of his own land comes; then many nations and great kings will make him their servant."

In this text we can see that the rule of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon will continue at least until his grandson. As we have already seen in Isaiah the Medes will rise up against Babylon.

In Daniel Chapter 5 Belshazzar brings in some silver vessels that were taken from the temple in Jerusalem so they could use them to toast to the foreign gods and idols. After doing this Belshazzar sees some handwriting supernaturally being written on the wall. Daniel is called in to give King Belshazzar the interpretation. Daniel rebukes him by reminding him that he knew how God humbled King Nebuchadnezzar causing him to lose his sanity for a while. Yet knowing this he used the sacred vessels to toast to the foreign gods and idols, Daniel then gives him the interpretation (read Daniel Chapter 5).

> Daniel 5:22-29: **22** "'Yet you, his son, Belshazzar, have not humbled your heart, even though you knew all this, **23** but you have exalted yourself against the Lord of heaven; and they have brought the vessels of His house before you, and you and your nobles, your wives and your concubines have been drinking wine from them; and you have praised the gods of silver and gold, of bronze, iron, wood and stone, which do not see, hear or understand. But the God in whose hand are your life-breath and your ways, you have not glorified.' **24** Then the hand was sent from Him, and this inscription was written out. **25** Now this is the inscription that was written out: 'MENE, MENE, TEKEL, UPHARSIN.' **26** This is the interpretation of the message: 'MENE'-- God has numbered your kingdom

> and put an end to it. **27** 'TEKEL'-- you have been weighed on the scales and found deficient. **28** 'PERES'-- your kingdom has been divided and given over to the Medes and Persians. **29** Then Belshazzar gave orders, and they clothed Daniel with purple and put a necklace of gold around his neck, and issued a proclamation concerning him that he now had authority as the third ruler in the kingdom.

Remember that in Daniel Chapter 2 in king Nebuchadnezzar's dream we are told that another power inferior to Nebuchadnezzar and represented by its breast and its arms of silver would arise (Daniel 2:32 and 39). Here we are told that this second kingdom would be the Medes and the Persians. One should not overlook the fact that Daniel includes the Persians with the Medes in the takeover of Babylon. Also Belshazzar speaks of making Daniel the third ruler of the kingdom.

So the question is: What actually took place in history?

> Did Babylonian rule under Nebuchadnezzar last at least until Nebuchadnezzar's grandson as foretold by Jeremiah?
> Did the Medes and the Persians conquer Babylon?
> How would Daniel be labeled the third ruler in the kingdom under Belshazzar?
> Was Babylon destroyed never to be inhabited again as foretold by Isaiah?

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> "ref , **'Belshazzar,'** Belshazzar (550?-539?BC), in the Old Testament, Babylonian prince mentioned in Daniel 5 as the last Chaldean king of Babylon. He was slain when Babylon was captured by the Medes and the Persians. Although no ancient historian mentions his name as one of the successors of the second Chaldean king, Nebuchadnezzar II, the Babylonian cuneiform inscriptions gave the name Belsaruzar as that of the son of Nabonidus, the last king of Babylon. A later inscription suggested that Belshazzar was associated with his father on the throne." G4

In this encyclopedia article we have seen that:

> Babylon was captured by the Medes and the Persians as foretold by Daniel and Isaiah. Isaiah's ministry ended around 701 BC. The Medes entered Babylon around 539-550 BC. This means Isaiah foretold the rising of the Medes against Babylon about 150-160 years before it actually happened.
>
> Belshazzar was associated with his father on the throne. In other words Nabonidus and his son Belshazzar were co-rulers of Babylon. This is why Daniel was told he would be made the third ruler of the kingdom. Nabinidus and Belshazzar were the first two rulers. Daniel would have been the third ruler if their kingdom had not been overthrown. Remember the promise of being the third ruler came from the pagan king Belshazzar not as part of Daniel's prophecy. This does however give credibility to the historical part of Daniel.

Table of Contents pg 1, 2, 3, 4

*Enclopaedia Britanica***,** Multimedia CD 98

> **"Belshazzar,** Neo-Babylonian BEL-SHAR-USUR, Greek BALTASAR, or BALTHASAR (d. c. 539 BC), coregent of Babylon who was killed at the capture of the city by the Persians. Belshazzar had been known only from the biblical Book of Daniel (chapters 5, 7-8) and from Xenophon's Cyropaedia until 1854, when references to him were found in Babylonian cuneiform inscriptions. Though he is referred to in the Book of Daniel as the son of Nebuchadrezzar, the Babylonian inscriptions indicate that he was in fact the eldest son of Nabonidus, who was king of Babylon from 555 to 539, and of Nitocris, who was perhaps a daughter of Nebuchadrezzar. When Nabonidus went into exile (550), he entrusted Belshazzar with the throne and the major part of his army." G3

In this encyclopedia article we have seen that:

Babylon was captured by the Persians as foretold by Daniel.

King Belshazzar was very likely related to King Nebuchadnezzar. Belshazzar was the son of Nabonidus and Nitocris. Notocris being the daughter of Nebuchadnezzar would make Belshazzar the grandson of Nebuchadnezzar. This would fulfill the Babylonian kingdom lasting until the grandson of Nebuchadnezzar as foretold by Jeremiah 622 BC.

Before 1854 which is a couple of thousand years later our main reference for the existence of Belshazzar was the Bible. This is not an isolated event by any means. This alone should help us to recognize the credibility of the Bible.

The Archaeological Encyclopedia of the Holy Land, 1990

> "BABYLON (CITY OF); BABYLONIANS One of the most important cities of Mesopotamia, whose ancient name probably meant 'the gate of the gods'. ..... **It was not until the downfall of Assyria that Babylon, in the time of Nebuchadnezzar II, rose again to the status of the most important city in Mesopotamia**. Cyrus, King of Persia, conquered the city, which then became part of the Persian Empire. In 331 bc Babylon was conquered by Alexander the Great, who attempted to rebuild the venerated but decaying city. With his untimely death its long decline set in and in the Roman period it was no more than a famous heap of ruins." D3

In this reference work we have seen:

Babylon was conquered by Persia as foretold by Daniel.

Although Babylon was once considered the most important city in Mesopotamia it was left a heap of ruins and uninhabited as foretold by Isaiah approximately 701 BC.

Table of Contents pg 1, 2, 3, 4

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> **"(Babylon)** Babylon lost its independence forever when it fell to Cyrus the Great of Persia in 539 BC, but it continued to be a center of trade and culture. It was still fairly prosperous when Alexander the Great took up his residence in Nebuchadnezzar's palace, where he died in 323 BC. His successor, Seleucus, built a new city, Seleucia, nearby on the Tigris, because it had a deeper channel for navigation. From this time Babylon rapidly decayed. Its structures, which were faced with glazed brick, were torn down to provide brick for building elsewhere, and the once proud capital was reduced to a vast ruin. The ruins are near the town of al Hillah in Iraq." G5

In this encyclopedia article we have seen that:

Babylon was conquered by the Persians as foretold by Daniel.

The city of Babylon is left still uninhabited in Iraq as foretold by Isaiah.

So far we have covered the first two kingdoms in Nebuchadnezzar's dream. Nebuchadnezzar's kingdom is the head of gold. (BABYLON). The second kingdom represented by the breast and arms of silver was the Medes and the Persians. The third kingdom in Nebuchadnezzar's dream of the statue was its belly and its thighs of bronze (Daniel 2:32 and 39) We do not have to guess as to the interpretation of this kingdom of bronze, either. We can see that the kingdoms, starting from Nebuchadnezzar represented as the head of gold, are following in consecutive order. We also know who the first two kingdoms are (Babylon being the first and the Medes and the Persians being the second). Daniel has a vision that we find in Chapter 8 where these kingdoms overlap.

> Daniel 8:4-7: "**4** **I saw the ram** butting westward, northward, and southward, and no other beasts could stand before him, nor was there anyone to rescue from his power; but he did as he pleased and magnified himself. **5** While I was observing, behold, a male goat was coming from the west over the surface of the whole earth without touching the ground; and the goat had a conspicuous horn between his eyes. **6** And he came up to the ram that had the two horns, which I had seen standing in front of the canal, and rushed at him in his mighty wrath. **7** And I saw him come beside the ram, and he was enraged at him; and he struck the ram and shattered his two horns, and the ram had no strength to withstand him. So he hurled him to the ground and trampled on him, and there was none to rescue the ram from his power."

Table of Contents pg 1, 2, 3, 4

Topic Index

Introducing the kingdom of Greece

In this text we see that the ram was the one in power. Then we see a male goat that strikes the ram. We also see the ram had no strength to withstand the goat. In other words the goat overcame the ram. So who are the goat and the ram? The following text tells us.

> Daniel 8:16-22: "**16** And I heard the voice of a man between the banks of Ulai, and he called out and said, 'Gabriel, give this man an understanding of the vision.' **17** So he came near to where I was standing, and when he came I was frightened and fell on my face; but he said to me, 'Son of man, understand that the vision pertains to the time of the end.' **18** Now while he was talking with me, I sank into a deep sleep with my face to the ground; but he touched me and made me stand upright. **19** And he said, 'Behold, I am going to let you know what will occur at the final period of the indignation, for it pertains to the appointed time of the end. **20** The ram which you saw with the two horns represents the kings of Media and Persia. **21** And the shaggy goat represents the kingdom of Greece, and the large horn that is between his eyes is the first king. **22** And the broken horn and the four horns that arose in its place represent four kingdoms which will arise from his nation, although not with his power.'"

In this text we see that the ram represents the Medes and the Persians. We have already seen the Medes and the Persians as the ones who would conquer Babylon, in the writing on the wall seen by Belshazzar in Daniel Chapter 5. Now we see that the shaggy goat that represents the kingdom of Greece is the one that would conquer the Medes and the Persians. So the next question is "Did the kingdom of Greece conquer the Medes and the Persians in history?"

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> " '**Ancient Greece'** B2 Macedonian Supremacy (359-323 BC) Two Macedonian kings, Philip II (ruled 359-336 BC) and his son Alexander the Great (ruled 336-323 BC), filled the power vacuum in Greece by turning their formerly weak kingdom into an international superpower. The mountainous kingdom of Macedonia, north of the central Greek heartland, eventually became the **leader of Greece** and **conqueror of the Persian empire.**" G4

From this encyclopedia article we learn that:

Alexander the Great was the leader of a Greek empire.

Alexander conquered the Persian Empire.

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> **" 'Persia,'** III ALEXANDER THE GREAT AND THE SELEUCIDS. Alexander the Great, king of Macedonia, conquered the Persian Empire in a series of battles between 334 and 331 BC. Alexander integrated Persia into his empire, and by 323 BC, when he died, Alexander ruled most of the civilized world." G4

Table of Contents pg 1, 2, 3, 4

From this encyclopedia article we learn that:

Alexander the Great conquered the Persian Empire 334-331 BC.

Keep in mind that Nebuchadnezzar reigned approximately 605-561 BC. Daniel interpreted his dream during this time period. This means that Daniel foretold the Medes and the Persians being conquered by the Greeks at least 200 years before it actually happened.

The text we looked at in Daniel Chapter 8 goes into further detail concerning the Greek empire (verse 22). We are told that four kingdoms would arise from the Greek empire. This division is not mentioned in our text in Daniel Chapter 2. As one reads Daniel, especially the detail in Chapter 11, it is easy to see that there is much more detail than what I am covering here. However that would be a book in itself. For the sake of brevity I am sticking to the basic outline as seen in Daniel Chapter 2. This division actually still falls within the Greek empire in the text as well as what took place in history.

The Encyclopedia of Biblical Prophecy, page 380

"After Alexander's death in 323 and the eventual fall of his leading general Antigonus in 301, the empire divided into some four major areas, controlled by Greek generals: Macedonia under Cassander, Asia Minor under Lysimachus, Syria and eastward under Selecus, and Egypt under Ptolemy." A35

These Greek generals are also listed as successors of Alexander the Great by the 1st century Jewish Historian Josephus (*The Works of Josephus, The Antiquities of the Jews*, Book 12, Chapter 1 **(PDF pg. 441)**).

Concerning Nebuchadnezzar's dream in Daniel Chapter 2, we have now covered the first three kingdoms:

Nebuchadnezzar and Babylon were represented by the head of gold (Daniel 2:32 and 38).

Babylon was then conquered by the Medes and the Persians, which was said to be an inferior kingdom and represented as the breast and arms of silver (Daniel 2:32-39, and Daniel 5:28).

The Medes and the Persians were then conquered by the Greeks, represented as the belly and thighs of bronze (Daniel 2:32 and Daniel 8:20-21).

Table of Contents pg 1, 2, 3, 4

Topic Index

The Roman Empire

The fourth kingdom is unlike the first three kingdoms; while we were specifically told who they were, the fourth kingdom is not interpreted and named for us in Scripture. We know the succession of the first three kingdoms — (1) Babylon; (2) The Medes and the Persians; (3) The Greeks. History tells us that the empire that followed the succession of these three empires was the Roman Empire. Therefore, all we have to do is look at the description given to us in the Bible and see if it correlates with the Roman Empire. First we will give a couple of references showing that the Roman Empire did indeed follow the Greek Empire.

Enclopaedia Britanica, Multimedia CD 98

"**The forms of Government, Primitive Government, the spread of civilization**
The empire of the Medes and Persians was overthrown by Alexander of Macedon; the Macedonian successor states were conquered by Rome..." G3

"Alexander of Macedon" was "Alexander the Great", as can be seen in the following reference.

International Standard Bible Encyclopedia, Electronic Database

"ALEXANDER, THE GREAT, Parentage and Early Life: Alexander, of Macedon, commonly called 'the Great' (born 356 BC), was the son of Philip, king of Macedon, and of Olympias, daughter of Neoptolemos, an Epeirote king." C1

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" '**ROMAN EMPIRE'.** When the ancient Greeks were reaching the height of their glory, the power of Rome, to the west, was slowly rising. The genius of the Greeks lay in art, literature, science, and philosophy. The Romans were best in warfare, engineering, and government. Rome rose to power gradually, with no set plan for world conquest. The Romans fought many wars and enslaved many people. By the time of Augustus, shortly before Christ, most of the known world was unified and at peace under Roman rule." G5

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" '**Ancient Greece**,' In the Hellenistic kingdoms, foreigners — kings and queens of Greek and Macedonian descent — had unrestricted rule over local populations. This kind of rule disturbed Greeks, who remembered their history of freedom. Therefore, in the 2nd century BC when the kingdoms had been weakened by war, some mainland Greeks appealed for help from the region's growing superpower, **Rome** Within about a hundred years, Rome conquered the remaining Hellenistic kingdoms and their Greek cities." G4

Table of Contents pg 1, 2, 3, 4

Now that we have established that the Roman Empire did indeed follow the Greek Empire, we will examine the Biblical description of this empire.

> Daniel 2:33-45: “its legs of iron, its feet partly of iron and partly of clay. **(34)** You continued looking until a stone was cut out without hands, and it struck the statue on its feet of iron and clay, and crushed them. **(35)** Then the iron, the clay, the bronze, the silver and the gold were crushed all at the same time, and became like chaff from the summer threshing floors; and the wind carried them away so that not a trace of them was found. But the stone that struck the statue became a great mountain and filled the whole earth. **(36)** "This was the dream; now we shall tell its interpretation before the king. **(37)** You, O king, are the king of kings, to whom the God of heaven has given the kingdom, the power, the strength, and the glory; **(38)** and wherever the sons of men dwell, or the beasts of the field, or the birds of the sky, He has given them into your hand and has caused you to rule over them all. You are the head of gold. **(39)** And after you there will arise another kingdom inferior to you, then another third kingdom of bronze, which will rule over all the earth. **(40**) "Then there will be a fourth **kingdom** as strong as iron; inasmuch as iron crushes and shatters all things, so, like iron that breaks in pieces, it will crush and break all these in pieces. **(41)** "And in that you saw the feet and toes, partly of potter's clay and partly of iron, it will be a divided **kingdom**; but it will have in it the toughness of iron, inasmuch as you saw the iron mixed with common clay. **(42)** "And as the toes of the feet were partly of iron and partly of pottery, so some of the kingdom will be strong and part of it will be brittle. **(43)** And in that you saw the iron mixed with common clay, they will combine with one another in the seed of men; but they will not adhere to one another, even as iron does not combine with pottery. **(44)** And in the days of those kings the God of heaven will set up a kingdom which will never be destroyed, and that kingdom will not be left for another people; it will crush and put an end to all these kingdoms, but it will itself endure forever. **(45)** Inasmuch as you saw that a stone was cut out of the mountain without hands and that it crushed the iron, the bronze, the clay, the silver, and the gold, the great God has made known to the king what will take place in the future; so the dream is true, and its interpretation is trustworthy."

Topic Index

One should notice that in verse 40 we are told, "Then there will be a fourth **kingdom**". Observe that this fourth kingdom is spoken of singularly. In verse 41 when we are told, "it will be a divided **kingdom**" — it is still spoken of singularly. Then in verse 44 we find kings and kingdoms in plural, not singular. It is in the days of these kings and kingdoms in which the God of heaven will set up a kingdom which will never be destroyed. There are those that interpret this last part a little differently, but the end result is still the same. First we will look at "the divided kingdom" then we will move on to the "kingdom which will never be destroyed" in verses 44-45.

Table of Contents pg 1, 2, 3, 4

a) The division of the Roman Empire

"And in that you saw the feet and toes, partly of potter's clay and partly of iron, it will be a divided kingdom." (Daniel 2:41)

The Roman Empire was dived into two divisions between the East and the West. Some commentators see this as the division spoken of in verse 41.

Webster's Family Encyclopedia, 1989 edition, Volume 9, Page 2209

" '**Roman Empire'**: The imperial period of ancient Roman history from 27 BC, when Octavian became emperor as * Augustus, until 476 AD....The 3rd century saw a rapid succession of army-nominated emperors, while Rome's frontiers were threatened by the aggression of the * Sasanians and the Goths. * Diocletian (reigned 284-305) countered these attacks with the reorganization of the Empire between East and West." A34

The Universal World Reference Encyclopedia, © 1947, Volume 13-14

" **'Rome, or The Roman Empire':**....In 27 BC Octavian became first emperor of Rome under the title of Augustus.... n 284 Diocletian reorganized the empire, and for nearly 200 years reforms delayed the inevitable disruption; but in 395 the empire separated into two divisions; the Eastern or Byzantine. and the Western... " A36

The division of the Roman Empire

"And in that you saw the feet and toes, partly of potter's clay and partly of iron, it will be a divided kingdom." (Daniel 2:41)

Other commentators see the division as being between the Jewish religious leaders who maintained authority or influence in the government and the Roman government. The Romans and the Jews, although cohabiting, certainly did not mix well as with the clay and the iron in the text in Daniel 2:42-43.

SANHEDRIN (from *Nelson's Illustrated Bible Dictionary*)

"[SAN hee drun] (a council or assembly) — the highest ruling body and court of justice among the Jewish people in the time of Jesus. Headed by the high priest of Israel, the Sanhedrin was granted limited authority over certain religious, civil, and criminal matters by the foreign nations that dominated the land of Israel at various times in its history. The Sanhedrin was exercising this limited power when it charged Jesus with the crime of blasphemy but then sent him to Pilate, the Roman official, for a formal trial and sentencing." C2

ROMAN EMPIRE (from *Nelson's Illustrated Bible Dictionary*)

"The situation of the Jews varied considerably under the different Roman rulers. Basically, the Romans treated the Jews fairly. Herod the Great rebuilt the Temple in 20 BC, and Herod Agrippa sought Jewish favor by persecuting the Christians <Acts 12:1-3>. Archelaus, on the other hand, was a cruel and tyrannical ruler who massacred many Jews <Matt. 2:22>. Resentful of the presence of these foreign oppressors, the Jews refused to recognize anyone but God as sovereign." C2

Table of Contents pg 1, 2, 3, 4

c) The division of the Roman Empire

"And in that you saw the feet and toes, partly of potter's clay and partly of iron, it will be a divided kingdom." (Daniel 2:41)

> Other commentators see the division of the Roman Empire as something that still continues to this day. They see ten divisions within the Roman Empire corresponding to the ten toes in Nebuchadnezzar's dream and the ten horns mentioned in Daniel chapter 7 and Revelation chapter 17.

In Vernon McGee's commentary on Daniel, on page 47 he states, "The Roman Empire fell apart — no enemy destroyed it. Rome is still living in the great nations of Europe today: Italy, France, Great Britain, Germany, and Spain are all part of the Roman Empire. The laws of Rome live on and her language also." A37

Groliers Multimedia Encyclopedia

> " **'Rome, ancient':** Ancient Rome grew from a small prehistoric settlement on the Tiber River in Latium in central Italy into an empire that encompassed all of the Mediterranean world. The Romans developed a civilization that formed the basis for modern Western civilization." G1

(This encyclopedia article tends to agree somewhat with those who claim the Roman Empire can still be seen in the world today.)

SUMMARY OF THE DIVISION

The Bible tells us that the fourth kingdom (the Roman Empire) will be a divided kingdom. Exactly how it is divided the Bible does not actually say. Each of the divisions that were covered have some valid points as well as confirmation found in history. It is logical then to conclude that this portion of prophecy is valid because the Roman Empire was indeed divided.

Topic Index

IN THE DAYS OF THOSE KINGS

"And in the days of those kings the God of heaven will set up a kingdom which will never be destroyed, and that kingdom will not be left for another people; it will crush and put an end to all these kingdoms, but it will itself endure forever. Inasmuch as you saw that a stone was cut out of the mountain without hands and that it crushed the iron, the bronze, the clay, the silver, and the gold, the great God has made known to the king what will take place in the future; so the dream is true, and its interpretation is trustworthy."
(Daniel 2:44-45)

Table of Contents pg 1, 2, 3, 4

Here is where our text in Daniel Chapter 2 shifts. The fourth kingdom in verse 40 is spoken as a single kingdom. Next we have some sort of division of the fourth kingdom and then after that we have kingdoms in plural, in which time the God of heaven will set up a kingdom which will never be destroyed. The reader should also take notice of the fact that the image that Nebuchadnezzar saw was destroyed by a stone that was cut out without hands (Daniel 2:34-35 and 44-45).

There are three questions that should be asked here.

What sort of kingdom will never be destroyed and will last forever?
What is the stone that destroys the image that Nebuchadnezzar saw?
When are "the days of those kings" as we see in verse 44?

1. What sort of kingdom will never be destroyed and will last forever?

In the Bible the only kingdom that will last forever is a heavenly kingdom. The kingdom of Christ will have no end.

Isaiah 9:6-7: "For a child will be born to us, a son will be given to us; and the government will rest on His shoulders; and His name will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Eternal Father, Prince of Peace. There will be no end to the increase of His government or of peace, On the throne of David and over his kingdom, to establish it and to uphold it with justice and righteousness from then on and forevermore. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will accomplish this."

Daniel 7:13-14: "I kept looking in the night visions, and behold, with the clouds of heaven One like a Son of Man was coming, and He came up to the Ancient of Days and was presented before Him. And to Him was given dominion, glory and a kingdom, that all the peoples, nations, and men of every language might serve Him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion which will not pass away; and His kingdom is one which will not be destroyed."

Luke 1:31-33: "And behold, you will conceive in your womb, and bear a son, and you shall name Him Jesus. He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Most High; and the Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David; and He will reign over the house of Jacob forever; and His kingdom will have no end."

John 18:36: "Jesus answered, 'My kingdom is not of this world. If My kingdom were of this world, then My servants would be fighting, that I might not be delivered up to the Jews; but as it is, My kingdom is not of this realm.'"

Revelation 11:15: "And the seventh angel sounded; and there arose loud voices in heaven, saying, 'The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord, and of His Christ; and He will reign forever and ever.'"

Table of Contents pg 1, 2, 3, 4

The Bible, including the book of Daniel, tells us that the kingdom which will never be destroyed is Christ's kingdom. We can then logically conclude that the kingdom which is to follow the division of the Roman Empire is Christ's kingdom.

2. What is the stone that destroys the image that Nebuchadnezzar saw?

Considering that the Bible tells us that the kingdom that will never be destroyed is Christ's kingdom, it is interesting to find that Jesus Christ is also referred to as a stone.

Isaiah 28:16: "Therefore thus says the Lord GOD, 'Behold, I am laying in Zion a stone, a tested stone, a costly cornerstone for the foundation, firmly placed. He who believes in it will not be disturbed.'"

Matthew 21:42-45: "Jesus said to them, 'Did you never read in the Scriptures, 'The stone which the builders rejected, this became the chief corner stone; this came about from the Lord, and it is marvelous in our eyes'? Therefore I say to you, the kingdom of God will be taken away from you, and be given to a nation producing the fruit of it. And he who falls on this stone will be broken to pieces; but on whomever it falls, it will scatter him like dust." And when the chief priests and the Pharisees heard His parables, they understood that He was speaking about them."

Acts 4:10-12: "let it be known to all of you, and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of Jesus Christ the Nazarene, whom you crucified, whom God raised from the dead — by this name this man stands here before you in good health. He is the stone which was rejected by you, the builders, but which became the very corner stone. And there is salvation in no one else; for there is no other name under heaven that has been given among men, by which we must be saved."

Romans 9:32-33: "Why? Because they did not pursue it by faith, but as though it were by works. They stumbled over the stumbling stone, just as it is written, 'Behold, I lay in Zion a stone of stumbling and a rock of offense, and he who believes in Him will not be disappointed."

Ephesians 2:20: "having been built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus Himself being the corner stone "

1 Corinthians 10:4: "and all drank the same spiritual drink, for they were drinking from a spiritual rock which followed them; and the rock was Christ."

Table of Contents pg 1, 2, 3, 4

The stone that King Nebuchadnezzar saw in his dream was cut out without hands. This is an indication that what was to come was beyond human means. This stone in Nebuchadnezzar's dream destroyed all of the earthly nations (Daniel 2:34-35). Furthermore, in the Bible, the kingdom which will never be destroyed is Christ's kingdom. Then we find that Jesus Christ is referred to as a stone in Scripture. The Bible reveals to us that Jesus Christ is the stone that destroys all of the earthly kingdoms and sets up his own kingdom that will have no end. According to the Book of Daniel this will take place after the division of the fourth kingdom (The Roman Empire, Daniel 2:40-45).

3. **When are "the days of those kings" as we see in verse 44?**

Daniel 2:44: *"And in the days of those kings the God of heaven will set up a kingdom which will never be destroyed, and that kingdom will not be left for another people; it will crush and put an end to all these kingdoms, but it will itself endure forever."*

There are two dominate views of this within the Christian church today:

In the days of the Roman Empire Christ's Kingdom was set up and it will have no end.

In this view Christ's kingdom is seen in a spiritual sense in that Christ has already overcome the world, and by accepting Jesus we enter into His kingdom rule now. This view also maintains that there will later be a literal fulfillment when all the nations will come to an end.

John 16:33: "These things I have spoken to you, that in Me you may have peace. In the world you have tribulation, but take courage; I have overcome the world."

Colossians 1:13: "For He delivered us from the domain of darkness, and transferred us to the kingdom of His beloved Son. "

In the days of the kingdoms derived from the division of the Roman Empire, Christ's kingdom will be set up. (This would be the nations we see today, as seen earlier in McGee's commentary on Daniel and in the book *National Sunday Law* by A. Jan Marcussen.)

This view takes the more literal approach, declaring that all of the nations were not actually overthrown as seen in Daniel. This literal view expects this to take place as part of the fulfillment of the Book of Revelation.

Daniel 2:35: "Then the iron, the clay, the bronze, the silver and the gold were crushed all at the same time, and became like chaff from the summer threshing floors; and the wind carried them away so that not a trace of them was found. But the stone that struck the statue became a great mountain and filled the whole earth."

Table of Contents pg 1, 2, 3, 4

Revelation 11:15: “And the seventh angel sounded; and there arose loud voices in heaven, saying, ‘The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord, and of His Christ; and He will reign forever and ever.’”

Topic Index

WHY IS ANY OF THIS IMPORTANT?

Keep in mind that Daniel lived in the 6th century BC. The book of Daniel accurately foretold the Medes and the Persians conquering the Babylonian empire. Furthermore Daniel accurately foretold the Greeks as being the ones that would conquer the Medes and the Persians. Then we are introduced to the Roman Empire which, we were told, would be divided. Up to this point we have several hundred years of history predicted accurately. Considering that the Book of Daniel accurately foretold of the rise and fall of major world powers over a period of several hundred years; it is a good bet that the rest of this prophecy will come true as well. Whichever view one takes as to when this will happen the result is still the same. Jesus Christ will indeed rule and all earthly kingdoms will be abolished. The Bible also tells us there is life after death, so it will effect everyone, no matter when it takes place. The question then is how will Jesus respond to you when you ask for entrance into his kingdom?

Matthew 10:33: "But whoever shall deny Me before men, I will also deny him before My Father who is in heaven.”

Mark 8:38: "For whoever is ashamed of Me and My words in this adulterous and sinful generation, the Son of Man will also be ashamed of him when He comes in the glory of His Father with the holy angels."

I John 2:22-25: “Who is the liar but the one who denies that Jesus is the Christ? This is the antichrist, the one who denies the Father and the Son. Whoever denies the Son does not have the Father; the one who confesses the Son has the Father also. **As for you, let that abide in you which you heard from the beginning. If what you heard from the beginning abides in you, you also will abide in the Son and in the Father**. And this is the promise which He Himself made to us: eternal life.”

The Bible tells us that no one is good enough on their own to gain entrance into the kingdom of God. However Jesus paid the full price for all of our sins. All we have to do is ask for His forgiveness and surrender our life to Him and we will dwell with Him forever.

Table of Contents pg 1, 2, 3, 4

BIBLE REVEALS SCIENTIFIC FACT PRIOR TO HUMAN DISCOVERY

The Bible, unlike any other collection of writing, is unique in the fact that is surpasses mankind's abilities. The prophecies in the Bible that have already been fulfilled are what most point to as proof that the Bible is truly the Word of God. No man has ever been able to predict the future with the detail and accuracy that the Bible has shown. However, the Bible is in no way limited in providing evidence to the fact that it is indeed the Word of God. Another area that shows the Bible's authenticity is science.

Most informed Christians will readily admit that the Bible is not a textbook about science. You cannot prove the Bible to be the Word of God based *solely* on science. Then again, neither does science refute the Bible. While there is a certain "religion vs. science" mindset out there, in fact, the Bible has never been proven scientifically wrong. (The same cannot be said about some theories proposed by scientists, over the years). Science and the Bible are in harmony in areas where they do meet. But the Bible was written to reveal God to mankind. The Bible was not written to teach anybody about science.

Here are some examples in which the Bible mentions scientific facts that today we know are true. What is amazing about these examples is that the Bible declared them as fact long before mankind discovered they were true!

Topic Index

Job 26:7: "He stretches out the north over empty space, and hangs the earth on nothing."

Keep in mind that Job lived almost 2,000 years before Christ. The concept that the earth was suspended on nothing was not even considered by scientists for thousands of years after Job. Now, with our satellites and trips into space, we know this to be true — but such was not known in Job's day. The Egyptians declared the earth rested on pillars. The Greeks said it was carried on the back of Atlas. People believed many things, but they did not come close to believing what we know to be true today, and what Job declared a few thousand years ago. How did Job know this was true when science had not yet discovered it?

Topic Index

Job 28:25: "When He imparted weight to the wind, and meted out the waters by measure..."

Does air have weight? In 1643 a mathematician named Evangelista Torricelli performed an experiment to learn if air has weight. His experiment is what led to the making of our barometer. The relative weights of air and water are needed for the efficient functioning of the world's hydrologic cycle, which in turn sustains life on the earth.

Nasa.gov relates an experiment that children can do to verify this fact. Simply make a scale that pivots and balances correctly. Hang two empty balloons on each side, and balance it out. Then remove one balloon, blow it up, then hang it back in the same place. The side with the inflated balloon will alter downwards, because it now has the weight of the air inside the balloon.
The discovery of air containing weight was made during the 16th century; remember, Job lived almost 2,000 years before Christ. The book of Job told us air has weight before science discovered this was true.

Topic Index

Leviticus 17:11: "For the life of the flesh is in the blood, and I have given it to you on the altar to make atonement for your souls; for it is the blood by reason of the life that makes atonement."

During George Washington's time, the practice of blood-letting to treat various kinds of illnesses was common. This practice is actually what killed him. An understanding of this verse in the Bible could have spared his life. In today's world it is common knowledge that blood circulation is vital for our survival.

William Harvey (1 April 1578 – 3 June 1657) was an English physician who was the first to describe correctly and in exact detail the systemic circulation and properties of blood being pumped around the body by the heart. Yet all critics will agree that the Book of Leviticus was written a few thousand years ago (any year that falls in BC is long before the 1600s and William Harvey).

We were told that "the life of the flesh is in the blood" in Leviticus, long before science discovered the details of this truth.

Topic Index

Job 36:27-30: "27) For He draws up the drops of water, they distill rain from the mist, 28) Which the clouds pour down, they drip upon man abundantly. 29) Can anyone understand the spreading of the clouds, the thundering of His pavilion? 30) Behold, He spreads His lightning about Him, and He covers the depths of the sea."

This Bible reference clearly describes evaporation and its cycle, which we now refer to as the **hydrological cycle**. We also see that the context includes the sea. However, the Greeks believed that spring water came from the oceans and was purified in the ground, making fresh water. The understanding of the evaporation process, as described in the Book of Job, was not discovered and understood until the 17th century.

Table of Contents pg 1, 2, 3, 4

Here is a short related quote from Chapter 11 of the 1999 NGWA Press publication, *Ground Water Hydrology for Water Well Contractors* (nwga.org) that you may find interesting:
"Before the 17th century, many natural philosophers accepted the Greek theory (proposed by people who lived in a semiarid climate on limestone hills) that rainfall was insufficient to feed springs and rivers. It was thought that spring water was purified sea water from deep within the earth (reverse osmosis?).However, in 1580, Bernard Palissy proposed the theory of the hydrologic cycle. Pierre Perrault (1608-1680) made careful observations of rainfall and stream flow in the Seine River basin, confirming Palissy's hunch and thus began the study of modern scientific hydrology."

In Job, we find the Bible describes the hydrological cycle long before science discovers the reality of it.

Topic Index

Job 38:16: "Have you entered into the springs of the sea? Or have you walked in the recesses of the deep?"

Think how this must have sounded to Job. There is no way that anybody in his day could have known there were springs in the ocean. It is not like anybody went deep sea diving, or any other type of underwater exploration.

Today we know that hot springs or hydrothermal vents come from the ocean floor. Scientist first discovered these in the 1970's. How could Job possibly know that there were springs of any kind on the ocean floor?

Topic Index

Ecclesiastes 1:6: "Blowing toward the south, then turning toward the north, the wind continues swirling along; and on its circular courses the wind returns."

A study of *Jet Stream & Trade Winds* will show you that the wind does go in the circular course as described in this verse that was written in between 930-970 BC.

Jet Stream was discovered during World War 2.

The Trade Winds were discovered during the time of Christopher Columbus (1451-1506) (earthguide.ucsd.edu & Wikipedia.org)

How did Solomon know about this in 900 BC?

Table of Contents pg 1, 2, 3, 4
Topic Index

Isaiah 44:24: "Thus says the LORD, your Redeemer, and the one who formed you from the womb, 'I, the LORD, am the maker of all things, stretching out the heavens by myself, and spreading out the earth all alone...

There are a number of Bible references speaking of the stretching out of the heavens. Isaiah is not the oldest reference, but it was written about 740 BC.

With the discoveries found with the Hubble Telescope and studies of red shifts most scientists today will agree that the universe has expanded. This is something that has just been discovered in our life time, but the Bible declared the heavens were stretched out in about 17 different passages, several thousand years ago.

Looking at the Bible, we see that there is no other document, whether it be religious or non religious, that provides this kind of credentials or uniqueness. In prophecies we see the Bible tell world history in advance and much of it has already happened. So the sincere student can check out if the Bible really can foretell the future by looking to see if it was accurate on predictions in the past. Well it does not end there. The Bible also had knowledge of scientific details long before they were discovered by mankind. How is that possible? Perhaps because the Bible it is what exactly what it claims to be: the written word of God!

Topic Index

Table of Contents pg 1, 2, 3, 4

The idea of Hell is a very uncomfortable subject for anybody to seriously consider. However we cannot deny that it is taught in the Bible. This should lead to some honest questions to ask about Hell.

You can click on **"The Doctrine of Hell"** to start reading at the beginning of this topic or use the topic index to jump to the part that interest you most.

TOPIC INDEX

Overview of content in this section is as follows:

THE DOCTRINE OF HELL

The nature of God and a fair judge (pg. 144)

The 3 Greek words translated as "hell" and the 3 places (pg. 144)

Who goes to hell? (pg. 148)

What is Hell like? (pg.149)

They have a body (pg. 149)

They are conscious (pg. 150)

The argument against consciousness (pg. 150)

They are suffering in some manner (pg. 152)

They will be in this state forever there is no 2nd chance (pg. 153)

For some there are greater degrees of punishment (pg. 153)

Turn to Jesus to escape hell (pg. 154)

What the early church believed (pg. 154)

Table of Contents pg 1, 2, 3, 4

THE DOCTRINE OF HELL

I do not feel right about starting off this subject without first explaining a little about the nature of God. The Bible tells us that God is love (1John .4:8). In fact He loves us so much He made the ultimate sacrifice for us by spilling His own blood on our behalf (John 3:16, Acts 20:28).God is also a God of justice and His very nature demands judgment upon all sin (Romans 6:23).We are also told that without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness of sin (Hebrews 9:22).That's how serious sin is! But because the Lord Himself paid for our sins, all we have to do is accept Him and His payment as a free gift (John 3:16, Ephesians 2:8-9).He will indeed judge the world. It is also true that people will condemn themselves to hell by rejecting Christ as Lord & Savior and ignoring God's plan of salvation.

It is important to recognize that to demand justice is part of God's nature; however, He does not take pleasure in it. Ezekiel 33:11 reads, *"Say to them, 'As I live!' declares the Lord GOD, 'I take no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but rather that the wicked turn from his way and live. Turn back, turn back from your evil ways! Why then will you die, O house of Israel?"* This is one of my favorite verses that shows the heart of God. Twice He pleads with them to turn back, turn back from evil ways. The Lord asks them why they would choose to die. You see by His nature that God must judge sin. Yet we also see that He would rather forgive — but He can't unless people repent, because He is a God of justice.

> Deuteronomy 10:17-18: "For the LORD your God is the God of gods and the Lord of lords, the great, the mighty, and the awesome God who does not show partiality, nor take a bribe. He executes justice for the orphan and the widow, and shows His love for the alien by giving him food and clothing."
>
> Psalm 9:7-8: "But the LORD abides forever; He has established His throne for judgment, And He will judge the world in righteousness; He will execute judgment for the peoples with equity."

We are all sinners, and those who do not accept His payment for their sins will receive His wrath. As we will see, Hell is a very real and unpleasant place. Hell was made for the devil and his angels (Matthew 25:41). We can avoid it by turning to Jesus.

Topic Index

There are three Greek words referring to the abode of the unrighteous in the New Testament. These three Greek words are translated in English as "Hell" in the King James Version of the Bible. The word "Hell" is also defined as three different places (all underline, bold, and italic emphasis in this chapter mine):

Table of Contents pg 1, 2, 3, 4

There is the present Hell as we see in Luke 16:23 (KJV): "And in **hell** he lifts up his eyes, being in torments, and seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom."

Revelation 20:14 (KJV) reads, "And death and **hell** were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death." Both of these verses use the Greek word number 86 in the *Strong's Greek/Hebrew Dictionary*: "halides (hah'-dace); from 1 (as negative particle) and 1492; properly, unseen, i.e. 'Hades' or the place(state) of departed souls: KJV-- grave, hell."[C3] Notice that in the book of Luke, Jesus referred to hell as a place where the unrighteous went. We find in the book of Revelation, that this same hell is cast into the lake of fire in the final Judgment.

There is the future Hell. Jesus refers to this future Hell in the following passage from Mark 9:43-44: "And if your hand causes you to stumble, cut it off; it is better for you to enter life crippled, than having your two hands, to go into **hell,** into the unquenchable fire, [where their worm does not die, and the fire is not quenched.]"

This future Hell Jesus spoke of in Mark 9:43-44 is the lake of fire. Here He describes this Hell as unquenchable fire. *Strong's Greek/Hebrew Dictionary* lists the "Hell" written of in Mark 9:43 as word #1067 — "geena (gheh'-en-nah); of Hebrew origin [1516 and 2011]; valley of (the son of) Hinnom; ge-henna (or Ge-Hinnom), a valley of Jerusalem, used (figuratively) as a name for the place (or state) of everlasting punishment: KJV-- hell."[C3]

Nelson's Illustrated Bible Dictionary has the following to say regarding Gehenna: "...Gehenna, the Greek form of the Hebrew word that means 'the vale of Hinnom'— a valley just south of Jerusalem. In this valley the Canaanites worshiped Baal and the fire-god Molech by sacrificing their children in a fire that burned continuously. Even Ahaz and Manasseh, kings of Judah, were guilty of this terrible, idolatrous practice <2 Chr. 28:3; 33:6>. In the time of Jesus, the Valley of Hinnom was used as the garbage dump of Jerusalem. Into it were thrown all the filth and garbage of the city, including the dead bodies of animals and executed criminals. To consume all this, fires burned constantly. Maggots worked in the filth. When the wind blew from that direction over the city, its awfulness was quite evident. At night wild dogs howled and gnashed their teeth as they fought over the garbage.

"Jesus used this awful scene as a symbol of hell. In effect he said, 'Do you want to know what hell is like? Look at the valley of Gehenna.' So hell may be described as God's 'cosmic garbage dump'. All that is unfit for heaven will be thrown into hell.

"Because of the symbolic nature of the language, some people question whether hell consists of actual fire. Such reasoning should bring no comfort to the lost. The reality is greater than the symbol. The Bible exhausts human language in describing heaven and hell. The former is more glorious, and the latter more terrible, than language can express." [C2]

There is no one in this future Hell (the lake of fire) now. The first ones mentioned in the Bible to be cast into the lake of fire are the beast and the false prophet:

> Revelation 19:20: "And the beast was seized, and with him the false prophet who performed the signs in his presence, by which he deceived those who had received the mark of the beast and those who worshiped his image; these two were thrown alive into the lake of fire which burns with brimstone."

It is after this that the devil and "Hell" (as seen in Luke 16:23), as well as whosoever was not found written in the book of life, are cast into the lake of fire as shown in the text below.

> Revelation 20:10-15 (KJV): "And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are, and shall be tormented day and night forever and ever. And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them. And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works. And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were anthem: and they were judged every man according to their works. And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire."

Notice that those who were not written in the book of life are cast into the lake of fire. That means the deceased are not there now, but rather they are in the "Hell" that I mentioned in 1) (the Hell of Luke 16:23). The populace of the Luke 16:23 “Hell” shall be cast into the lake of fire during the time written about in Revelation 20:10-15.

There is a Hell for certain angels. The third Greek word translated as "Hell" is from the *Strong's Greek/Hebrew Dictionary* word #5020,“tartaroo (tar-tar-o'-o); from Tartaros (the deepest abyss of Hades); to incarcerate in eternal torment: KJV-- cast down to hell.” This Greek word is only used in 2 Peter.2:4: "For if God did not spare angels when they sinned, but cast them into **hell** and committed them to pits of darkness, reserved for judgment." [C3]

These angels are also mentioned in Jude 1:6. Since we know that nobody is as of yet in Gehenna (the lake of fire), and 2 Peter 2:4 uses an entirely different Greek word for Hell, it is logical to believe that this is perhaps a different location or a different part of the Hell mentioned in Luke 16:23, concerning the story of Lazarus in Abraham's bosom and the rich man in Hell. We also know that the demons are fallen angels and many of them are here upon the earth. Some people have speculated who these angels were and why they were held captive, but Scripture does not say enough about them to reach a definite conclusion.

Table of Contents pg 1, 2, 3, 4

In the Old Testament, all of the words translated as Hell in the King James Version of the Bible come from the Hebrew word found in Strong's #7585 — "she'owl (sheh-ole'); or sheol (sheh-ole'); from 7592; Hades or the world of the dead (as if a subterranean retreat), including its accessories and inmates: KJV-- grave, hell, pit." [C3] This Hebrew word has also been translated in King James as "grave" (Genesis 44:29, 31; Job 7:9; Psalm 30:3; and Isaiah 14:11) and it has also been translated as "pit" (Numbers 16:30, 33; Job17:16). Although the body is usually put into a grave or pit after it dies, it is a mistake to interpret this as its entire meaning.

In the following text **the words in bold and underlined** in verses 9, 11 and 15 are from this same Hebrew word (#7585 in the *Strong's Greek/Hebrew Dictionary*). However **the word in bold and underlined** in verse 19 in Strong's is from the Hebrew word #6913 — qeber, (keh'-ber); or (feminine) qibrah (kib-raw'); from 6912; a sepulchre: KJV-- burying place, grave, sepulchre." [C3]

Isaiah 14:9-19 (KJV):

"**Hell** from beneath is moved for thee to meet thee at thy coming: it stirreth up the dead for thee, even all the chief ones of the earth; it hath raised up from their thrones all the kings of the nations.

All they shall speak and say unto thee, 'Art thou also become weak as we? Art thou become like unto us?'

Thy pomp is brought down to the **grave**, and the noise of thy viols: the worm is spread under thee, and the worms cover thee.

How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! How art thou cut down to the ground, which didst weaken the nations!

For thou hast said in thine heart, 'I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God: I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north:

I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the most High.'

Yet thou shalt be brought down to **hell**, to the sides of the pit.

They that see thee shall narrowly look upon thee, and consider thee, saying, Is this the man that made the earth to tremble, that did shake kingdoms;

That made the world as a wilderness, and destroyed the cities thereof; that opened not the house of his prisoners?

All the kings of the nations, even all of them, lie in glory, everyone in his own house.

But thou art cast out of thy **grave** like an abominable branch, and as the raiment
of those that are slain, thrust through with a sword, that go down to the stones of the pit;
as a carcass trodden under feet."

This passage was addressed to the King of Babylon in verse 4. In this text, verse 9 shows that those in Hell (#7585, she'owl) are eager for him to come so that they may mock him (verse 10). The King of Babylon is cast out of his grave (verse 19, #6913, qeber) to be thrown into Hell. Since he is cast out of his grave and thrown into Hell it is easy to see they are not same thing. Here #7585 (she'owl) and #6913 (qeber) are opposites, not synonyms. (This passage refers not only to the King of Babylon, but to Satan himself.)

Table of Contents pg 1, 2, 3, 4

Topic Index

WHO GOES TO HELL?

To get a clear understanding of whom goes to Hell you should also understand what it means to be saved and the difference between grace and works.

John 15:6: "If anyone does not abide in Me, he is thrown away as a branch, and dries up; and they gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned." In this verse, anyone who does not abide in Jesus will go to Hell.

Thessalonians 1:6-9: "For after all it is only just for God to repay with affliction those who afflict you, and to give relief to you who are afflicted and to us as well when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with His mighty angels in flaming fire, dealing out retribution to those who do not know God and to those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus. And these will pay the penalty of eternal destruction, away from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power," This passage says that anyone who does not know God, and also those who do not obey the Gospel of Jesus, goes to Hell.

Revelation 21:7-8: "He who overcomes shall inherit these things, and I will be his God and he will be My son. But for the cowardly and unbelieving and abominable and murderers and immoral persons and sorcerers and idolaters and all liars, their part will be in the lake that burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death."Most people focus on the murderers and other immoral people mentioned in this passage, but it actually says that *all* unbelievers are included in those who will go to Hell.

Revelation 20:12-15:“And I saw the dead, the great and the small, standing before the throne, and books were opened; and another book was opened, which is the book of life; and the dead were judged from the things which were written in the books, according to their deeds. And the sea gave up the dead which were in it, and death and Hades gave up the dead which were in them; and they were judged, every one of them according to their deeds. And death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. This is the second death, the lake of fire. And if anyone's name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire.”Here we find that anybody's name that is not recorded in the book of life will go to Hell.

From these verses we have learned that there are those will end up in Hell — but we are all sinners. Anyone not covered by Jesus' payment for their sins (because of refusal to accept Him and His substitutional sacrifice on the cross), will go to Hell. The good news is that the blood of Jesus covers all sin (1 John 1:7-10).

Table of Contents pg 1, 2, 3, 4

Topic Index

WHAT IS HELL LIKE?

The Bible speaks of Hell in metaphorical descriptions. By the descriptions we can learn certain truths (metaphorical or not, Scripture certainly is not describing anything good). We do know that those in Hell

have bodies,
are conscious, and
are suffering in some manner.
They will be in this state forever (there is no second chance).
For some, there are greater degrees of punishment.

Topic Index

Those in Hell have bodies.

Daniel 12:2: "And many of those who sleep in the dust of the ground will awake, these to everlasting life, but the others to disgrace and everlasting contempt."

John 5:28-29: "Do not marvel at this; for an hour is coming, in which all who are in the tombs shall hear His voice, and shall come forth; those who did the good deeds to a resurrection of life, those who committed the evil deeds to a resurrection of judgment."

In this text we see that everyone will be resurrected — whether they are resurrected for eternal life in Heaven, or for eternal judgment in Hell. Paul, when writing to the church at Corinth, described the resurrected bodies that they would receive as imperishable (1 Corinthians 15:42); in other words, their new bodies would last forever.

Matthew 5:29-30 (see also Matthew 18:8-9, Mark 9:45-47): "And if your right eye makes you stumble, tear it out, and throw it from you; for it is better for you that one of the parts of your body perish, that for your whole body to be thrown into hell. And it your right hand makes you stumble, cut it off, and throw it from you; for it is better for you that one of the parts of your body perish, than for your whole body to go into hell."

By Jesus' words we can see the seriousness of sin. We also see that Jesus believed that those going to Hell would go there with a body. He gives us a metaphorical description of an irrevocable law. His listeners understood that once an eye was plucked out, it would not be put back. Likewise, once a body is thrown in hell, it will not come back out.

Table of Contents pg 1, 2, 3, 4

Topic Index

2) Those in Hell are conscious.

In Luke 16:19-31, Jesus told a story of a man in Hell. Some people choose to believe this is a parable; others do not. Even if we consider it a parable we need to remember Jesus always taught specific truths in His parables. In this text, a rich man is in Hell and fully conscious — he can see, speak, and experience misery. Also, across the gulf, Lazarus — who is not in Hell — is also conscious, and he is being comforted. The truth being taught here would seem to be a warning that Hell is a place of mental and physical misery.

Jesus spoke to the Sadducees in Matthew 22:23-32, The Sadducees said there was no resurrection, and Jesus said, "regarding the resurrection of the dead, have you not read that which was spoken to you by God, saying, 'I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob'? He is not the God of the dead but of the living." Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob had died long before, but Jesus referred to them as alive. Moses had also died long before Jesus was born. Yet as recorded in Matthew 17:1-8, he and Elijah appeared on top of a mountain and talked to Jesus. Certainly Moses was conscious in order to be able to talk to Jesus! The Apostle Paul said he would rather be dead and be with the Lord but for the sake of the brethren he knew he must continue on. (Philippians 1:20-24, 2 Corinthian 5:6-9). Why would Paul wish for such a thing if death only meant that he would enter a state of unconsciousness? Keep this in mind when I deal with the "3) they are suffering in some manner."

Topic Index

How can those in Hell be in torment if they are not conscious? But before I move on to that subject, there are two Bible passages I would like to comment on. These are passages that some people mistakenly cite as a proof text that the dead are not conscious.

> Ecclesiastes 9:5-10: "For **the living know they will die**, but **the dead do not know anything**, **nor have they any longer a reward**, for their **memory is forgotten**. Indeed their love, their hare, and their zeal have already perished, and **they will no longer have a share in all that is done under the sun. Go, then, eat your bread in happiness**, and drink your wine with a cheerful heart, for God has already approved your works. Let your clothes be white all the time, and let not oil be lacking on your head. **Enjoy life** with the woman whom you love **all the days of your fleeting life which He has given to you under the sun; for this is your reward in life**, and in your toil in which you have labored **under the sun**. Whatever your hand finds to do, verily, do it with all your might; for there is no activity or planning or knowledge or wisdom in **Sheol** where you are going." ("Scheol" here is Strong's #7585, also translated as "grave", "pit", or "hell".)

People who believe the dead are unconscious point out the underlined parts of this passage. The thought is that if the dead do not know anything or have any activity, and their feelings have perished, they must be unconscious. There are a couple of problems with this view.

This idea does not align with other Scripture. This would contradict what Jesus said about Lazarus and the rich man, as well as other Scripture. Such as we seen in Luke 16:19-31 with Lazarus and the rich man.

This interpretation would not be true to the context of the passage. Solomon is referring to conscious action in this physical world. The context is not about what one does actively in the spiritual realm after death. In the **bolded words** we can see that in the living world, the dead are soon forgotten. The dead no longer know what is happening in our physical world. They no longer have any part of anything here "under the sun". Therefore enjoy life here while you can — because our time here "under the sun "is passing quickly.

Another verse commonly used by those who try to support their belief of the dead being unconscious is:

Psalm 146:4 (KJV): "His breath goeth forth, he returneth to his earth; in that very day his thoughts perish."

The word ('estonet) translated as "thoughts" here in the King James Version of Psalm 146:4 can also be translated as "plans", which is the way it appears in the NKJ and the NIV. *Webster's Collegiate Dictionary 10th Edition* lists a partial definition of thought as "a developed intention or plan."[A13] Following is the way this verse appears in the NIV:

Psalm 146:4 (NIV): "When their spirit departs, they return to the ground, on that very day their plans come to nothing."

Since the Hebrew word can also be translated as "plans" it seems logical to accept this translation. Viewing this verse this way does not affect the context of the passage. The words "thoughts" and "plans", by definition, can be referring to the same thing. It is more likely that this interpretation of the word is correct than it is that this verse is in contradiction with other Scriptures.

Table of Contents pg 1, 2, 3, 4

Topic Index

Those in Hell are suffering in some manner.

Revelation 14:9-12:"And another angel, a third one, followed them, saying with a loud voice, 'If anyone worships the beast and his image, and receives a mark on his forehead or upon his hand, he also will drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is mixed in full strength in the cup of His anger; and he will be **tormented** with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels and in the presence of the Lamb. And the smoke of their **torment** goes up forever and ever; **and they have no rest day and night**, those who worship the beast and his image, and whoever receives the mark of his name.' Here is the perseverance of the saints who keep the commandments of God and their faith in Jesus."

The word ″tormented" in this passage comes from the Greek word ″basanizo." Thayer's definition of Greek words defines it as following: "928 basanizo- (1) to test (metals) by the touchstone, which is a black siliceous stone used to test the purity of gold or silver by the color of the streak produced on it by rubbing it with either metal (2) to question by applying torture to torture (4) to vex with grievous pains (used of body or mind), to torment (5) to be harassed, to be distressed; used of those who are struggling at sea with a head wind." C6

Granted, the passages of the Bible concerning Hell are written with symbolic language. But symbolic of what? The use of this word in no way implies ceasing to exist or being unconscious. In fact, quite the opposite is true. Notice the text here said this state lasted forever and ever, and that they had no rest day or night.

Matthew 13:41-42: "The Son of Man will send forth His angels, and they will gather out of His kingdom all stumbling blocks, and those who commit lawlessness, and will cast them into the furnace of fire, in that place there shall be **weeping** and gnashing of teeth."

The word "weeping" in this passage is defined as follows by *Vine's Expository Dictionary of Biblical Words* "WEEPING klauthmos ^2805^, akin to A, No. 1, denotes 'weeping, crying,'<Matt. 2:18; 8:12; 13:42,50>, RV (KJV, 'wailing'); <22:13; 24:51;25:30; Luke 13:28; Acts 20:37>." C4

I believe that is significant that this same Greek word was used to describe how the people were weeping when Herod had all of the boys two years old and younger murdered (Matthew 2:16-18). Can you imagine the sorrow and weeping that took place at that time and place in history?

Table of Contents pg 1, 2, 3, 4

Topic Index

Those in Hell will be in this state forever, and there is no second chance.

The following verse implies that there is no second chance. Even as Christ died only once, man will be judged only once.

Hebrews 9:27-28:"And inasmuch as it is appointed for men to die once and after this comes judgment, so Christ also, having been offered once to bear the sins of many, shall appear a second time for salvation without reference to sin, to those who eagerly await Him."

They will be in this state forever.

Revelation 14:11: "And the smoke of their torment goes up forever and ever; and they have no rest day and night, those who worship the beast and his image, and whoever receives the mark of his name."

Matthew 25:46: "And these will go away into **eternal** punishment, but the righteous into **eternal** life."

In this passage the word "eternal" is used twice. It is the same Greek word in both places. *Thayer's* definition of Greek and Hebrew words defines it as follows: "166 aionios-1) without beginning and end, what has always been and always will be; 2) without beginning; 3) without end, never to cease, everlasting." C6

To say that punishment in Hell is only for a time is the same as saying Heaven will only be for a time. The same Greek word translated as "eternal" is used in both passages. The word "life", as in "eternal life", speaks of the quality of life. *Thayer's* describes "life" as "used of the absolute fullness of life, both essential and ethical, which belongs to God". *Strong's* defines punishment in this verse as (penal infliction: .. punishment, torment). C6

Topic Index

For some, there are greater degrees of punishment.

Luke 20:46-47: "Beware of the scribes, who like to walk around in long robes, and love respectful greetings in the market places, and chief seats in the synagogues, and places of honor at banquets, who devour widows' houses, and for appearance's sake offer long prayers; these will receive greater condemnation." (See also Matthew 23:14, Mark 12:40.)

The Bible tells us that some will receive a greater condemnation, but it does not tell us how. *Thayer's* says the following about the word "condemnation": "a) condemnation of wrong, the decision (whether severe or mild) which one passes on the faults of others."C6

Table of Contents pg 1, 2, 3, 4

The following are some of the terms that have been used in the Bible to describe Hell: outer darkness; weeping and gnashing of teeth; unquenchable fire; pits of darkness; furnace of fire; eternal fire; where their worm does not die, and the fire is not quenched; tormented with fire; he also will drink of the wine of the wrath of God; eternal destruction; away from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power.

Topic Index

No matter how you view it, these words are not describing anything good. Jesus spoke of Hell more than anyone else in the Bible. Why would He go to such lengths to warn people about it if Hell were not real? All of his descriptions of it were terrible. Considering what Jesus had to say about it, how can we help but believe that Hell is a very real and terrible place? I have found studying this subject depressing and disturbing. I plead with you, if you do not know Jesus consider Him carefully. Jesus is the only way that you can escape this awful place!!!

> Luke 12:4-9 (see also Matthew 10:28): "And I say to you, My friends, do not be afraid of those who kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do. But I will warn you whom to fear: fear the One who after He has killed has authority to cast into hell; yes, I tell you, fear Him! Are not five sparrows sold for two cents? And yet not one of them is forgotten before God. Indeed, the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Do not fear; you are of more value than many sparrows. And I say to you, everyone who confesses Me before men, the Son of Man shall confess him also before the angels of God; but he who denies Me before men shall be denied before the angels of God."
>
> Mark 8:36: "For what does it profit a man to gain the whole world, and forfeit his soul?"
>
> 2 Corinthians 6:2:"behold, now is 'the acceptable time', behold, now is 'the day of salvation'".

Following are some related Scripture concerning this subject: Matthew 3:10-12, Matthew 7:19, Matthew 13:40-50, Matthew 23:33, Matthew 25:29-41, Mark 9:43, Luke 3:9-17, Romans 12:19-20, Revelation 14:9-10.

Topic Index

The writings from church leaders in the first couple of centuries are not Scripture. They are however, helpful in determining if the Church has changed any major doctrine or the interpretation of Scripture. Generally speaking those living closer to the time when New Testament writers lived would have different insights into the culture of that time. They also would at times have a clearer understanding of what Jesus and the Apostles taught.

Table of Contents pg 1, 2, 3, 4

The following quotes can be found in *The Ante Nicene Fathers* (1989):

"Justin's Dialog with Trypho" (Chapter V) — "But I do not say, indeed, that all souls die; for that were truly a piece of good fortune to the evil. What then? The souls of the pious remain in a better plane, while those of the unjust and wicked are in a worse, waiting for the time of judgment. Thus some which have appeared worthy of God never die; but others are punished so long as God wills them to exist and to be punished." D1

"The Second Apology of Justin for the Christians Addressed to the Roman Senate" (Chapter 1) — "For everywhere, whoever is corrected by father, or neighbour, or child, or friend, or brother, or husband, or wife, for a fault, for being hard to move, for loving pleasure and being hard to urge to what is right (except those who have been persuaded that the unjust and intemperate shall be punished in eternal fire, but that the virtuous and those who lived like Christ shall dwell with God in a state that is free from suffering,— we mean, those who have become Christians), and the evil demons, who hate us, and who keep such men as these subject to themselves, and serving them in the capacity of judges, incite them, as rulers actuated by evil spirits, to put us to death." D1

Topic Index

Table of Contents pg 1, 2, 3, 4

In our world today what many people believe about Satan is not biblical. We are indeed in a spiritual war. It is wise to understand our enemy and his tactics so that we will prevail.

You can click on "Satan a biblical perspective" to start reading at the beginning of this topic or use the topic index to jump to the part that interest you most.

Topic Index

Satan: A Biblical look at who he is and false world views (pg. 157)

Overview of content in this section is as follows:
Satan
Satan is an actual being that was created not just some unseen force (pg. 157)

Satan is not an equal opposite of God. (pg. 158)
Satan is not in Hell and he does not reign over it. (pg. 159)
Satan's' Power (pg. 159)
The Christian need not fear him. (pg. 160)

Satan's' Tactics (pg. 160)
Satan blinds peoples' minds so that they do not receive the truth (pg. 161)
Satan snatches away seeds of truth planted in people's hearts. (pg. 161)
Satan deceives people by showing signs and wonders (pg. 161)
Satan has his own religious leaders disguised as Apostles of Christ. (pg. 161)
Satan uses these teachers to teach doctrines of demons and the deep things of Satan. (pg. 161)

Paul warns us of these false teachings (pg. 161)
Demons are sometimes what actually lie behind idols and false gods. (pg. 162)
Satan fills people's hearts with the desire to sin. (pg. 162)
Satan will use our unwillingness to forgive against us. (pg.162)
Satan even uses well meaning people to try to stop God's plan. (pg. 163)
Satan puts thoughts into people's minds to carry out his purpose. (pg. 163)
God sometimes allows this for the purpose of chastising his people. (pg. 163)
God may also allow these things to keep us from falling into the error of pride. (pg. 163)
Satan hinders missionary work. (pg. 164)
Satan is ready to accuse. (pg. 164)
Satan uses scripture and half truths for the purpose of deceiving. (pg. 164)

The many forms of temptation. (pg. 165)
God will help us through these temptations. (pg. 165)
If we do not want to fall into Satan's snares than we must cling to what God has already told us. 1

To the Non-Believer (pg. 167)
Other Interesting quotes: (pg. 168)

Table of Contents pg 1, 2, 3, 4

SATAN: A BIBLICAL LOOK AT WHO HE IS AND FALSE WORLD VIEWS

In our world today many people do not even believe that Satan exists. This of course is a great advantage for the devil. It is hard to prepare to defend yourself against the tactics of the enemy if you do not believe the enemy exists. Perhaps Satan himself had something to do with the un-Biblical worldview of him. Satan is also often pictured as half-man/half-beast, with horns, tail, and cloven hoofs, carrying a trident. This un-Biblical view of him is so ridiculous that some reject belief in his existence altogether. The greatest witness we have to Satan's actual existence is that of Jesus Christ. Who should know better than the creator?

Jesus created angels.
"For He delivered us from the domain of darkness, and transferred us to the kingdom of His beloved Son, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins. And He is the image of the invisible God, the first-born of all creation. For by Him all things were created, {both} in the heavens and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities-- all things have been created by Him and for Him."
Colossians 1:13-16

(Concerning rulers and authorities as demonic beings see Ephesians 6:12, Ephesians 2:2, Colossians 2:15, and 1 John 3:8.)

JESUS CONSIDERED SATAN AN ACTUAL BEING, NOT JUST SOME UNSEEN FORCE

.
Jesus had a conversation with Satan during which Satan twisted Scripture and tried to tempt Jesus to sin (Matthew 4:1-10). Jesus refers to Satan as one who steals the word of God from men's hearts (Mark 4:15). Jesus declared he saw Satan fall from heaven (Luke 10:18). Jesus told Simon that Satan had asked permission to sift Him like wheat; in other words, to destroy His faith (Luke 22:31-32). In these Scriptures Jesus shows us that Satan is not just an unseen force, but rather he is an actual being.

Table of Contents pg 1, 2, 3, 4

SATAN IS A FALLEN ANGEL, WHICH IS A CREATED BEING

"You were in Eden, the garden of God; every precious stone was your covering: the ruby, the topaz, and the diamond; the beryl, the onyx, and the jasper; the lapis lazuli, the turquoise, and the emerald; and the gold, the workmanship of your settings and sockets, was in you. On the day that you were created they were prepared. You were the anointed cherub who covers, and I placed you there. You were on the holy mountain of God; you walked in the midst of the stones of fire. You were blameless in your ways from the day you were created, until unrighteousness was found in you. By the abundance of your trade you were internally filled with violence, and you sinned; therefore I have cast you as profane from the mountain of God. And I have destroyed you, O covering cherub, from the midst of the stones of fire. Your heart was lifted up because of your beauty; you corrupted your wisdom by reason of your splendor. I cast you to the ground; I put you before kings, that they may see you. By the multitude of your iniquities, in the unrighteousness of your trade, you profaned your sanctuaries. Therefore I have brought fire from the midst of you; it has consumed you, and I have turned you to ashes on the earth in the eyes of all who see you."
Ezekiel 28:13-18

Although this passage also relates to the king of Tyre, from this passage we learn that Satan is a created being that was beautiful and full of wisdom. He was originally blameless then he became violent and arrogant because his beauty and wisdom went to his head. Satan's pride was his downfall. A similar passage relating to the king of Babylon and Satan's fall due to pride can be found in Isaiah 14:4-19. A cherub as mentioned in this passage is an angel.

Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary, Tenth Edition

"cher.ub n, pl usu cher.u.bim [L, fr. Gk cheroub, fr. Heb kerubh] (13c) 1 pl: an order of angels--see celestial hierarchy 2 pl usu cherubs a: a beautiful usu. winged child in painting and sculpture b: an innocent-looking usu. chubby and rosy person -- che.ru.bic adj -- che.ru.bi.cal.ly adv -- cher.ub.like adj..."

"**celestial hierarchy** n (1883): a traditional hierarchy of angels ranked from lowest to highest into the following nine orders: angels, archangels, principalities, powers, virtues, dominions, thrones, cherubim, and seraphim" [A13]

Topic Index

As already stated, many people do not believe that Satan exists. Others lean toward the idea that Satan is the equal opposite of God, making him much greater than he actually is. Satan is called the "god of this world" (2 Corinthians 4:4), but he does not posses the attributes of the true God. For Satan to be the opposite of God he would have to posses some of these divine attributes of God. Scripture tells us that God is all-powerful (Job 42:2, Jeremiah 32:17, Matthew 19:26, Luke 1:37); God is all-knowing (Psalm 147:5, Isaiah 40:28, Romans 11:33); and God is present everywhere at once (Psalm 139:7-12, Jeremiah 23:23-24, 2 Chronicles 2:6). Satan does not posses any of these qualities; therefore he is not simply an equal opposite of God.
We know that Satan is not all-powerful because he is defeated by the cross, and his works are destroyed by Christ (Colossians 2:14-15, Hebrews 2:14, 1 John 3:8).

Satan's final end is in the lake of fire (Revelation 20:10). Furthermore, Satan is not all-knowing — he believed Job would turn against God if the protective hedge was taken away (Job 1:9-11). Satan was shown wrong when Job did not turn against God (Job 1:22). Throughout the book of Job we find that Satan tried to prove that he could make Job curse God, and he always failed to do so. This is not an all-knowing being. Finally, Satan cannot be everywhere at once. Satan himself said that he was "roaming about on the earth, and walking around on it" (Job 2:2). This indicates that he is only at one place at a time. We are also told that our adversary, the devil, prowls about like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour (1 Peter 5:8). This is another indication that he is not everywhere at once. Also in Revelation 12:9 we find that Satan and his angels were thrown down to the earth. This shows us that Satan and his followers are not everywhere at once. Our conclusion is that since Satan does not posses any of these attributes of God, he is not an equal opposite of God. Satan is a created being that does not posses the wisdom or the power that God has.

Topic Index

Another un-Biblical worldview of Satan is that he reigns over hell. Satan is not even in hell. He is roaming about on the earth (1 Peter 5:8, Job 1:7 and 2:2). Satan is not going to be bound until the 1,000-year reign of Christ. After this he will be released for a time and then finally thrown into the lake of fire Revelation 20:1-10. When Satan does enter hell it will be as a prisoner, not as a ruler (Isaiah 14:9-17). In the meantime he does have his own kingdom here on earth (Matthew 12:26, John 14:30, 16:11, Acts 26:18, 2 Corinthians 4:4, Ephesians 2:2, 6:12).

Topic Index

SATAN'S POWER

Satan by nature is described as a liar, murderer, adversary, deceiver, sinner, enemy, and tempter (John 8:44, 1 Peter 5:8, Revelation 12:9, 1 John 3:8, Matthew 13:39, 1 Thessalonians 3:5). Satan hates both God and man and therefore is an enemy that we should be prepared for. Satan's power is limited to what God will allow as we see in the book of Job. We also see that Satan's power is not to be taken lightly. In the first two chapters in Job we find that Satan had the ability to get the Sabeans to kill Job's children. He inflicted Job with a bodily disease. Satan got the Chaldeans to kill Job's servants and steal his camels. Satan had the power to cause fire to come from heaven to kill sheep and servants. Satan also was able to cause a great wind to destroy a house and some young men. In Isaiah 14:16 looking back from the end time, we find that Satan had enough influence to make the earth tremble, and shake kingdoms. Even Michael the archangel seemed to exercise care in the way that he dealt with Satan (Jude 9). The demons under him also posses power, and there are lots of them. In Mark 5:1-17 we find that a "Legion" of demons took possession of a man. Among the Romans a "legion" was numbering from 4,200 to 6,000 men. This demon-possessed man was seemingly insane and could not be chained up, for he would break the chains. Jesus cast the demons out of the man and they went into a herd of pigs. About 2,000 pigs ran down a steep bank into the sea and killed themselves. In Luke 13:16 we find a woman who had a demon-caused illness for 18 years. What we have here is a very real and powerful enemy of mankind.

Table of Contents pg 1, 2, 3, 4
Topic Index

THE CHRISTIAN NEED NOT FEAR HIM

The Christian needs to be aware of this enemy to successfully deal with his tactics; however, the Christian need not fear him. This can be seen in the following Scriptures.

I John 4:3-4: "and every spirit that does not confess Jesus is not from God; and this is the spirit of the antichrist, of which you have heard that it is coming, and now it is already in the world. You are from God, little children, and have overcome them; because greater is He who is in you than he who is in the world."

James 4:7: "Submit therefore to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you."

1 Corinthian 10:13: "No temptation has overtaken you but such as is common to man; and God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will provide the way of escape also, that you may be able to endure it."

Romans 8:38-39: "For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord."

Hebrews 2:13-16: "And again, 'I will put My trust in Him.' And again, 'Behold, I and the children whom God has given Me.' Since then the children share in flesh and blood, He Himself likewise also partook of the same, that through death He might render powerless him who had the power of death, that is, the devil; and might deliver those who through fear of death were subject to slavery all their lives. For assuredly He does not give help to angels, but He gives help to the descendant of Abraham."

Topic Index

SATAN'S TACTICS

It is to our benefit to recognize some of our enemy's tactics. When you know how the enemy works you are not as likely to be caught in one of his snares. This knowledge can also be used to help others. This is by no means an exhaustive examination of Satan's tactics, but it should be enough to get you thinking. We are indeed in a spiritual war (Ephesians 6:12) and one sure way to get wounded in war is not to keep an eye open for the enemy!

Table of Contents pg 1, 2, 3, 4

Satan blinds people's minds so that they do not receive the truth.

2 Corinthians 4:4: "in whose case the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelieving, that they might not see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God."

Satan snatches away seeds of truth planted in people's hearts.

Matthew 13:19: "When anyone hears the word of the kingdom, and does not understand it, the evil one comes and snatches away what has been sown in his heart. This is the one on whom seed was sown beside the road."

Satan deceives people by showing signs and wonders

Mark 13:22: "for false Christs and false prophets will arise, and will show signs and wonders, in order, if possible, to lead the elect astray." (See also 2 Thessalonians 2:9, Revelation 19:20.)

Satan has his own religious leaders disguised as Apostles of Christ.

2 Corinthians 11:13-15: "For such men are false apostles, deceitful workers, disguising themselves as apostles of Christ. And no wonder, for even Satan disguises himself as an angel of light. Therefore it is not surprising if his servants also disguise themselves as servants of righteousness; whose end shall be according to their deeds." (See also 2 Peter 2:1-3, Matthew 13:39.)

Consider the many cults that we have today. They use the name of Jesus and use some of the same terminology as Christians. Often leaders in these cults were at one time in a Christian church. In a sense Satan has joined the church to try to lead it astray.

Satan uses these teachers to teach doctrines of demons and the deep things of Satan.

1 Timothy 4:1: "But the Spirit explicitly says that in later times some will fall away from the faith, paying attention to deceitful spirits and doctrines of demons..."

Revelation 2:24: "But I say to you, the rest who are in Thyatira, who do not hold this teaching, who have not known the deep things of Satan, as they call them-- I place no other burden on you." (See also Ephesians 4:14.)

False doctrines about God, Jesus and salvation actually are doctrines of demons. The enemy is very subtle in his approach at times. You do not have to be a Satanist to be involved in doctrines of demons. You only need to have fallen for his deception so that you believe in a false god, a false Jesus and a false gospel.

Topic Index

Paul warns us of these false teachings.

Galatians 1:6-8: "I am amazed that you are so quickly deserting Him who called you by the grace of Christ, for a different gospel; which is really not another; only there are some who are disturbing you, and want to distort the gospel of Christ. But even though we, or an angel from heaven, should preach to you a gospel contrary to that which we have preached to you, let him be accursed." (See also 2 Corinthians 11:3-4.)

Table of Contents pg 1, 2, 3, 4
Topic Index

Demons are sometimes what actually lie behind idols and false gods.
1 Corinthians 10:20: "No, but I say that the things which the Gentiles sacrifice, they sacrifice to demons, and not to God; and I do not want you to become sharers in demons." (See also Psalm 106:37-39, Deuteronomy 32:16-17, Leviticus 17:7.)

These idols were actually nothing but wood or stone yet people believed they had power. Is it possible that the reason they believed this is because they saw or experienced this power? The Gentiles sacrificed to idols yet the Apostle Paul says they sacrificed to demons. An idol is a false god. We have many false gods today that are not made out of wood or stone, but rather are theological. Some people involved with these false gods today experience power or see signs and wonders. Why? This is because demons have power.

Topic Index

Satan fills people's hearts with the desire to sin.
Acts 5:3: "But Peter said, 'Ananias, why has Satan filled your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit, and to keep back some of the price of the land?'"

John 13:1-2: "Now before the Feast of the Passover, Jesus knowing that His hour had come that He should depart out of this world to the Father, having loved His own who were in the world, He loved them to the end. And during supper, the devil having already put into the heart of Judas Iscariot, the son of Simon, to betray Him."

We war against our own sinful flesh (Romans 7:14-25) and sometimes, as we see here, Satan can enter our thoughts. This is why you cannot do just any old thing that feels good. There is indeed pleasure in sin, but it always has consequences **(**2 Thessalonians 2:12, 2 Peter 2:12-15, Romans 1:32-2:2, Proverbs 14:12).

Topic Index

Satan will use our unwillingness to forgive against us.

2 Corinthians 2:10-11: "But whom you forgive anything, I forgive also; for indeed what I have forgiven, if I have forgiven anything, I did it for your sakes in the presence of Christ, in order that no advantage be taken of us by Satan; for we are not ignorant of his schemes."

Ephesians 4:26-27: "Be angry, and yet do not sin; do not let the sun go down on your anger, and do not give the devil an opportunity."

Satan will try to break up the church from within. He will try to break up marriages, families and other relationships. When we refuse to forgive and do not try to resolve our indifferences we give the devil a hold in which to try to break up our lives.

Table of Contents pg 1, 2, 3, 4
Topic Index

Satan even uses well meaning people to try to stop God's plan.
Matthew 16:21-23: "From that time Jesus Christ began to show His disciples that He must go to Jerusalem, and suffer many things from the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised up on the third day. And Peter took Him aside and began to rebuke Him, saying, 'God forbid it, Lord! This shall never happen to You.' But He turned and said to Peter, 'Get behind Me, Satan! You are a stumbling block to Me; for you are not setting your mind on God's interests, but man's.'"

Jesus is saying that Peter's rebuke against Jesus actually originated from Satan. Peter meant well in that he did not want anything to happen to Jesus. Satan used this to try to hinder God's plan of reconciliation through the cross.

Topic Index
Satan puts thoughts into people's minds to carry out his purpose. God sometimes allows this for the purpose of chastising His people.
1 Chronicles 21:1-2: "Then Satan stood up against Israel and moved David to number Israel. So David said to Joab and to the princes of the people, 'Go, number Israel from Beersheba even to Dan, and bring me word that I may know their number.'"

2 Samuel 24:1: "Now again the anger of the LORD burned against Israel, and it incited David against them to say, 'Go, number Israel and Judah.''

Here we have the anger of the Lord against Israel. We also have Satan standing against Israel. Satan actually worked through David, which the Lord allowed to fulfill His own judgment against Israel. We are also told in the New Testament that "whom the Lord loves He disciplines, and He scourges every son whom He receives" (Hebrews 12:6).

Topic Index
God may also allow these things to keep us from falling into the error of pride.

2 Corinthians 12:7: "And because of the surpassing greatness of the revelations, for this reason, to keep me from exalting myself, there was given me a thorn in the flesh, a messenger of Satan to buffet me-- to keep me from exalting myself!"

What this thorn in the flesh was we do not know. Many people speculate that Paul had some sort of eye disease. This is because Paul, speaking to the Galatians, said, "I bear you witness, that if possible, you would have plucked out your eyes and given them to me" (Galatians 4:15). Paul also told them, "See with what large letters I am writing to you with my own hand" (Galatians 6:11). Whatever the thorn in the flesh was, Paul prayed three times for it to depart from him, and then concluded that it was God's will for him.

Table of Contents pg 1, 2, 3, 4
Topic Index

Satan hinders missionary work.

1 Thessalonians 2:17-18: [17] But we, brethren, having been taken away from you for a short while—in person, not in spirit—were all the more eager with great desire to see your face. [18] For we wanted to come to you—I, Paul, more than once—and *yet* Satan hindered us.

Satan does not want anyone to come to Christ. (See also Acts 13:8-10.)

Satan is ready to accuse.

Zechariah 3:1: "Then he showed me Joshua the high priest standing before the angel of the LORD, and Satan standing at his right hand to accuse him." (See also Revelation 12:9-11.)

The Holy Spirit convicts the world of sin (John 16:7-8). Yet the devil is the one ready to accuse and condemn. Often as Christians we tend to want to give up when we see our own failures. We need to remember that the Holy Spirit *convicts* the world of sin, but the *condemnation* of Christians is from the devil (Romans 8:1: "Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.")

Topic Index

Satan uses Scripture and half truths for the purpose of deceiving.

Genesis 3:1-6: "(1) Now the serpent was more crafty than any beast of the field which the LORD God had made. And he said to the woman, 'Indeed, has God said, 'You shall not eat from any tree of the garden'?' (2) And the woman said to the serpent, 'From the fruit of the trees of the garden we may eat; (3) but from the fruit of the tree which is in the middle of the garden, God has said, 'You shall not eat from it or touch it, lest you die.'' (4) And the serpent said to the woman, 'You surely shall not die! (5) For God knows that in the day you eat from it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.' (6) When the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was desirable to make one wise, she took from its fruit and ate; and she gave also to her husband with her, and he ate."

The first thing the serpent (Satan) did was question God's word (verse 1). Then Eve made the mistake of adding to what God said (verse 3); God did not say anything about touching the tree. Next the serpent contradicted God's word (verse 4). Both Eve and Adam did in fact die, in two ways: (1) Spiritual death is alienation from the life of God; a state of condemnation (Romans 7:9-11 and 8:5-13, Ephesians 2:1-5 and 4:18); and (2) They also later died physically. There will be no more death in heaven (Revelation 21:4).

Matthew 4:1-11: "(1) Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. (2) And after He had fasted forty days and forty nights, He then became hungry. (3) And the tempter came and said to Him, 'If You are the Son of God, command that these stones become bread.' (4) But He answered and said, 'It is written, 'Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God.'' (5) Then the devil took Him into the holy city; and he had Him stand on the pinnacle of the temple,

and said to Him, ‘If You are the Son of God throw Yourself down; for it is written, 'He will give His angels charge concerning You'; and 'On {their} hands they will bear You up, lest you strike your foot against a stone.'' (7) Jesus said to him, ‘On the other hand, it is written, 'You shall not put the Lord your God to the test.'' (8) Again, the devil took Him to a very high mountain, and showed Him all the kingdoms of the world, and their glory; (9) and he said to Him, ‘All these things will I give You, if You fall down and worship me.’ (10) Then Jesus said to him, ‘Begone, Satan! For it is written, 'You shall worship the Lord your God, and serve Him only.'' (11) Then the devil left Him; and behold, angels came and began to minister to Him.”

After fasting for forty days, one might think that to make the stones become bread might not be all that unreasonable of a choice. Jesus did multiply the loaves and fishes (John 6:9-13) so we know that He could do this if He wanted to. Satan tried to get Jesus to sin against God. Jesus instead countered all of the temptations, starting with "it is written". We need to be aware that Satan may try to twist Scripture; yet we should put our trust in God's written word and not in ourselves.

Topic Index

THE MANY FORMS OF TEMPTATION

Our temptation often comes in the form of our own lust, appealing to our senses; in other words what we see and feel can become our temptation. When we give in to our own fleshly desires and fall into sin the end result is spiritual death.

I John 2:16: “For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the boastful pride of life, is not from the Father, but is from the world.”

Galatians 5:19-21: “Now the deeds of the flesh are evident, which are: immorality, impurity, sensuality, idolatry, sorcery, enmities, strife, jealousy, outbursts of anger, disputes, dissensions, factions, envying, drunkenness, carousing, and things like these, of which I forewarn you just as I have forewarned you that those who practice such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God.”

James 1:13-15: “Let no one say when he is tempted, ‘I am being tempted by God’; for God cannot be tempted by evil, and He Himself does not tempt anyone. But each one is tempted when he is carried away and enticed by his own lust. Then when lust has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and when sin is accomplished, it brings forth death.”

Topic Index

GOD WILL HELP US THROUGH THESE TEMPTATIONS

1 Corinthians 10:13: “No temptation has overtaken you but such as is common to man; and God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will provide the way of escape also, that you may be able to endure it.”

Table of Contents pg 1, 2, 3, 4

IF WE DO NOT WANT TO FALL INTO SATAN'S SNARES, THEN WE MUST CLING TO WHAT GOD HAS ALREADY TOLD US

Psalm 119:11: "Thy word I have treasured in my heart, that I may not sin against Thee."

Psalm 37:30-31: "The mouth of the righteous utters wisdom, and his tongue speaks justice. The law of his God is in his heart; His steps do not slip."

Job 23:12: "I have not departed from the command of His lips; I have treasured the words of His mouth more than my necessary food." (Job was tested more than most of us, and he did not waver in his faith in God. In the end he was blessed with more than what he lost; Job 42:7, and 12-17.)

Luke 8:15: "And the seed in the good soil, these are the ones who have heard the word in an honest and good heart, and hold it fast, and bear fruit with perseverance."

I John 2:14: "I have written to you, fathers, because you know Him who has been from the beginning. I have written to you, young men, because you are strong, and the word of God abides in you, and you have overcome the evil one."

Psalm 1:1-3: "How blessed is the man who does not walk in the counsel of the wicked, nor stand in the path of sinners, nor sit in the seat of scoffers! But his delight is in the law of the LORD, and in His law he meditates day and night. And he will be like a tree firmly planted by streams of water, which yields its fruit in its season, and its leaf does not wither; and in whatever he does, he prospers."

Josh 1:8: "This book of the law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do according to all that is written in it; for then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have success."

Ephesians 6:11-18: "(11) Put on the full armor of God, that you may be able to stand firm against the schemes of the devil. (12) For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places. (13) Therefore, take up the full armor of God, that you may be able to resist in the evil day, and having done everything, to stand firm. (14) Stand firm therefore, having girded your loins with truth, and having put on the breastplate of righteousness, (15) and having shod your feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace; (16) in addition to all, taking up the shield of faith with which you will be able to extinguish all the flaming missiles of the evil one. (17) And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. (18) With all prayer and petition pray at all times in the Spirit, and with this in view, be on the alert with all perseverance and petition for all the saints."

Table of Contents pg 1, 2, 3, 4

2 Timothy 3:16-17: "All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work."

Topic Index

TO THE NON-BELIEVER

I would like to conclude this section with a word of exhortation by quoting the following from *The Christian's Reasonable Service*, Volume I, Chapter 9, by Wilhelmus a Brakel, Th.F.:

"First of all I wish to address myself to the unconverted, stating that as long as you remain unconverted, you are subject to the power of the devil, having the devil as your father. 'Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do'(John 8:44). The devil is lord and master over you and he is at work in you. 'The spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience' (Eph. 2:2). You are his captive and in bondage to him. 'And that they may recover themselves out of the snare of the devil, who are taken captive by him at his will' (2 Tim. 2:26). He frequently moves you to commit acts, the commission of which you would have never deemed possible. He thus moved Judas to betray the Lord Jesus and afterward to hang himself. The devil often keeps you out of church, especially when he knows that the sermon to be preached could be a choice means to your conversion. During the sermon he seeks to detract you by infusing other thoughts, holding such matters before you which he knows you delight in, thereby facilitating your meditation upon them. If you hear something that makes an impression upon you, he seeks in every possible way to rob you of this impression (Mat. 13:19). The devil prevents you from comprehending the power of the gospel. 'But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost: in whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them' (2 Cor. 4:3–4). Do not think that this renders you innocent, for you yourself are also blind and of an evil disposition, willingly rejecting the gospel. The devil, however, often creates the occasion for this, stimulates you, and you then obey him.

"Carefully meditate upon all this and apply it to yourself. Consider that you are a slave of the devil, that he is your lord and master, that he controls you, engages you to be active in his cause, and will soon drag you as his prey to hell to be eternally tormented there. What a dreadful condition to be subject to such an abominable tyrant—the archenemy of God, Christ, and also yourself—who in bitter hatred murders your soul and eternally separates you from God and His blessed Christ! Therefore have mercy upon your own soul, wake up, hate the devil and his work, flee from him, bid his kingdom farewell, and surrender yourself to the sweet, easy, and lovely government of the Lord Jesus Christ—a government which will culminate in eternal salvation. Oh, that you would hear me! May the Lord save you." (End of quote) [D4]

Table of Contents pg 1, 2, 3, 4
Topic Index

INTERESTING QUOTATIONS

"Mammon is the largest slave-holder in the world."
F. Saunders

"The devil can cite scripture for his purpose."
William Shakespeare

"The devil hath power to assume a pleasing shape."
William Shakespeare

"Heaven's gates are not so highly arched as princes' palaces; they that enter there must go upon their knees."
Daniel Webster

"The road to Hell is paved with good intentions."
Samuel Johnson

: He (Satan) sometimes slanders God to men; as to Eve.....sometimes men to God; as Job .... and continually, man to man."
John Robinson

Topic Index

Table of Contents pg 1, 2, 3, 4

What did the first century Church really believe? How does that compare to the Church today? Didn't some doctrines like the Trinity only developed much later? Well here we will examine what some writers in the first century church had to say.

You can click on "Beliefs in the Church" to start reading at the beginning of this topic or use the page index to jump to the part that interest you most.

Topic Index

Are the Beliefs in the Church today the same as what was taught in the 1st Century?

Overview of content in this section is as follows:

Are the Beliefs in the Church today the same as what was taught in the 1st Century? (pg. 171)

Foundational Doctrines and people quoted (pg. 171)

The reliability of scripture (pg. 171)

The doctrine of the Trinity declaring that the Father is God, Jesus is God and the Holy Spirit is God and that these three persons are one singular God. (pg. 172)

3. Jesus died for our sins on a cross (pg. 175)

Jesus was bodily raised from the dead and he will return. (pg. 175)

Salvation is a free gift that cannot be earned. (pg. 177)

Satan and Hell are not a myth, but a reality. (pg. 177)

Interesting Quotes (pg. 178)

Table of Contents pg 1, 2, 3, 4

Are the beliefs of the Church today the same as the beliefs in the 1st Century?

As time passes by many things seem to evolve or change. If something about God or salvation is true today shouldn't it be true for all time since God does not change? (Malachi 3:6) It is true that if you take a story and verbally pass it down through a hundred people or so the story will more than likely not be the same at the end as it was when it started. If the foundational doctrines of the church are not the same today as they were in the beginning, then we no longer posses the truth as Jesus and the Apostles taught. This is why we must constantly go to the Scriptures for answers. The Bible is our written record of the truth revealed to us by God. We are told in the Bible that we should study the Scriptures and also that the Holy Spirit can teach us.

2 Timothy 2:15: "Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth." (KJV)

I John 2:27: "And as for you, the anointing which you received from Him abides in you, and you have no need for anyone to teach you; but as His anointing teaches you about all things, and is true and is not a lie, and just as it has taught you, you abide in Him." (NAS)

John 16:13: "But when He, the Spirit of truth, comes, He will guide you into all the truth; for He will not speak on His own initiative, but whatever He hears, He will speak; and He will disclose to you what is to come." (NAS)

John 14:26: "But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all that I said to you." (NAS)

1 Corinthians 2:10: "For to us God revealed them through the Spirit; for the Spirit searches all things, even the depths of God." (NAS)

This same Holy Spirit that will teach us as we study to rightly divide the word of truth has also taught the people in the beginning of the church. These people at the beginning of the church also had the advantage of being able to ask the Apostles what was meant in the letters they wrote that are now our New Testament. For example, Polycarp and Ignatius were both men who studied under the Apostle John, who wrote what we call the Gospel according to John, as well as 1st, 2nd and 3rd John, and the book of Revelation. We have records of what Polycarp and Ignatius wrote. When you review what was written by people who studied under the Apostles and then men who later studied under them, you can see how they interpreted the Scriptures. Here is where we find confirmation that the church today is indeed teaching the same basic truths that were taught in the beginning of the church. There are some minor doctrines taught in churches today that are not found in the writings of these men. For example, the teaching that the church will be raptured before the Great Tribulation is not confirmed in the writings of any of these men. However the foundational doctrines which many Christian denominations hold in common are confirmed in their writings.

Table of Contents pg 1, 2, 3, 4
Topic Index

The foundational doctrines that I am referring to are:

The reliability of Scripture.
The doctrine of the Trinity, declaring that the Father is God, Jesus is God, and the Holy Spirit is God; and that these three persons are one singular God.
Jesus died for our sins on a cross.
Jesus was bodily raised from the dead and He will return.
Salvation is a free gift that cannot be earned.
Satan and Hell are not a myth, but a reality.

I would like to share some quotes by early Christian writers concerning these foundational beliefs. The quotes are found in *The Ante-Nicene Fathers; Translations of The Writings of the Fathers down to AD 325*, The Rev. Alexander Roberts, D.D., James Donaldson, LL.D., Editors. These quotes are copied from the CD-Rom version put out by Logos Research Systems, Inc. There are also some Adobe References which show where to find it in the PDF version downloadable from my website.

The information below regarding the people quoted can be found in *A Dictionary of Early Christian Beliefs*, editor, David W. Bercot. [A7]
The people quoted are:

Clement of Rome: 1st century, c. 95. Bishop of the church in Rome, believed to be a companion of Peter and Paul (Philippians.4:3).

Clement of Alexandria: c.150-215. Teacher at Alexandria, Egypt, who was in charge of a school there.

Hippolytus: c. 170-236. A leading Presbyter in the Church of Rome.

Hermas: Origen believed this is who Paul mentioned in Romans 16:14, although some think he was the brother of Pius, a 2nd century Bishop of Rome.

Ignatius: c. 35-107. Bishop of the church of Antioch and a disciple of John.

Irenaeus: c.130-200. Bishop of the church of Lyons. He listened to Polycarp preach when he was young.

Polycarp: c.69-156. Bishop of the church at Smyrna and a disciple of John.

Justin Martyr: c. 100-165. Philosopher who converted to Christianity and became a strong evangelist and apologist.

Tertullian: c.160-230. Early apologist and once a presbyter in the church at Carthage.

Topic Index

The reliability of Scripture. **(PDF Vol. 1, pg.13, ch XLV)**

Clement of Rome, *Ante-Nicene Fathers: Volume I, The First Epistle of Clement to the Corinthians,* Chapter XLV:

"Look carefully into the Scriptures, which are the true utterances of the Holy Spirit. Observe that nothing of an unjust or counterfeit character is written in them." [D1]

Table of Contents pg 1, 2, 3, 4

From the same book, Chapter XLVII: **(PDF-vol. 1 pg. 14,** CHAP. XLVII.)

"Take up the epistle of the blessed Apostle Paul. What did he write to you at the time when the Gospel first began to be preached? Truly, under the inspiration of the Spirit..." D1

Clement of Alexandria, *Ante-Nicene Fathers: Volume II, The Stromata, or Miscellanies*, Book IV, Chapter I: **(PDF-vol. 2 pg. 376)**

"...having demonstrated that the Scriptures which we believe are valid from their omnipotent authority, we shall be able to go over them consecutively, and to show thence to all the heresies one God and Omnipotent Lord to be truly preached by the law and the prophets, and besides by the blessed Gospel."

From the same Volume in Book V, Chapter XIII: **(PDF- vol. 2, pg. 431)**

"Let him know that it was God Himself that promulgated the Scriptures by His Son. And he, who announces what is his own, is to be believed. 'No one,' says the Lord, 'hath known the Father but the Son, and he to whom the Son shall reveal Him.'"

Tertullian, *Ante-Nicene Fathers: Volume III, On Prayer*, Chapter XXII: **(PDF Vol. 3, pg. 1246)**

"The apostle-guided, of course, by the same Spirit by whom, as all the divine Scripture, so that book Genesis, was drawn up-has used the selfsame word in writing" D1

Topic Index

The doctrine of the Trinity.

Ignatius, *Ante-Nicene Fathers: Volume I, The Epistle of Ignatius to the Philippians*, Chapter 2:

"Wherefore also the Lord, when He sent forth the apostles to make disciples of all nations, commanded them to "baptize in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost," not unto one [person] having three names, nor into three [persons] who became incarnate, but into three possessed of equal honour." D1 **(PDF vol. 1, pg.98)**

Table of Contents pg 1, 2, 3, 4

Tertullian, *Ante-Nicene Fathers: Volume III, Tertullian Against Praxeas,* Chapter XXV" **(PDF vol.3 pg. 1133-1134)**

> "What follows Philip's question, and the Lord's whole treatment of it, to the end of John's Gospel, continues to furnish us with statements of the same kind, distinguishing the Father and the Son, with the properties of each. Then there is the Paraclete or Comforter, also, which He promises to pray for to the Father, and to send from heaven after He had ascended to the Father. He is called 'another Comforter,' indeed; but in what way He is another we have already shown, 'He shall receive of mine,' says Christ, just as Christ Himself received of the Father's. Thus the connection of the Father in the Son, and of the Son in the Paraclete, produces three coherent Persons, who are yet distinct One from Another. These Three are, one essence, not one Person, as it is said, 'I and my Father are One,' in respect of unity of substance not singularity of number." D1

The following definition of "Paraclete" is by *Webster's Collegiate Dictionary Tenth Edition:*

> Par.a.clete n [ME Paraclyte, fr. LL Paracletus, Paraclitus, fr. Gk Parakletos, lit., advocate, intercessor, fr. parakalein to invoke, fr. para- + kalein to call--more at low] (15c): holy spirit A13

Tertullian here is referring to John 14: 9-16, where Jesus said He would ask of the Father and He would send the Holy Spirit (also referred to as another Comforter in the King James Version of the Bible). We see in this text that Tertullian referred to the Paraclete as the Holy Spirit. Notice he stated that the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit were three persons that were distinct from one another. He further stated that these three persons were one in essence. Tertullian just defined the Trinity. Compare what Tertullian said to the following from *Nelson's Illustrated Bible Dictionary*:

> "TRINITY: The coexistence of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit in the unity of the Godhead (divine nature or essence). The doctrine of the trinity means that within the being and activity of the one God there are three distinct persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit." C2

Hippolytus, *Ante-Nicene Fathers: Volume V, Against the Heresy of One Noetus*: **(PDF vol. 5, pg. 436)**

> "Acknowledge God the Father Almighty, and Christ Jesus the Son of God, who, being God, became man, to whom also the Father made all things subject, Himself excepted, and the Holy Spirit; and that these, therefore, are three. But if he desires to learn how it is shown still that there is one God, let him know that His power is one. As far as regards the power, therefore, God is one. But as far as regards the economy there is a threefold manifestation, as shall be proved afterwards when we give account of the true doctrine. D1

Table of Contents pg 1, 2, 3, 4

The Doctrine of the Trinity
Jesus Is God

Ignatius, *Ante-Nicene Fathers: Volume I, The Epistle of Ignatius to the Romans*, Chapter 3:

> "For our God, Jesus Christ, now that He is with the Father, is all the more revealed [in His glory]. D1 **(PDF vol. 1, pg. 60)**

Clement of Alexandria, *The Ante-Nicene Fathers Volume 2, Exhortation to the Heathen, The Instructor,* Book 1, Chapter II: **(PDF vol.2, pg. 177)**

> "Now, O you, my children, our Instructor is like His Father God, whose son He is, sinless, blameless, and with a soul devoid of passion; God in the form of man, stainless, the minister of His Father's will, the Word who is God, who is in the Father, who is at the Father's right hand, and with the form of God is God. He is to us a spotless image; to Him we are to try with all our might to assimilate our souls. He is wholly free from human passions; wherefore also He alone is judge, because He alone is sinless." D1

The Doctrine of the Trinity
The Holy Spirit is God

Clement of Alexandria, *Ante-Nicene Fathers: Volume II, Fragments of Clemens Alexandrinus, III.- From the Catena on Luke, Edited by Corderius*: **(PDF Vol. 2, pg. 543)**

> "Luke 3:22. God here assumed the 'likeness' not of a man, but 'of a dove,' because He wished, by a new apparition of the Spirit in the likeness of a dove, to declare His simplicity and majesty." D1

Luke 3:22: "...and the Holy Spirit descended upon Him in bodily form like a dove, and a voice came out of heaven, 'Thou art My beloved Son, in Thee I am well-pleased.'"

Tertullian, *Ante-Nicene Fathers: Volume III, Against Praxeas,* Chapter XXX: **(PDF vol. 3, pg. 1145)**

> "He will come again on the clouds of heaven, just as He appeared when He ascended into heaven. Meanwhile He has received from the Father the promised gift, and has shed it forth, even the Holy Spirit-the Third Name in the Godhead, and the Third Degree of the Divine Majesty; the Declarer of the One Monarchy of God, but at the same time the Interpreter of the Economy, to everyone who hears and receives the words of the new prophecy; and 'the Leader into all truth,' such as is in the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Ghost, according to the mystery of the doctrine of Christ." D1

Table of Contents pg 1, 2, 3, 4

Topic Index

3. Jesus died for our sins on a cross.

Polycarp, *Ante-Nicene Fathers: Volume I, Epistle of Polycarp to the Philippians,* Chapter 1:

> "Jesus Christ, who for our sins suffered even unto death, [but] 'whom God raised froth the dead, having loosed the bands of the grave. In whom, though now ye see Him not, ye believe, and believing, rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory;' into which joy many desire to enter, knowing that 'by grace ye are saved, not of works,' but by the will of God through Jesus Christ." D1 **(PDF vol. 1, pg. 24)**

In this same section in Chapter VII Polycarp mentions the cross:

> "For whosoever does not confess that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh, is antichrist; and whosoever does not confess the testimony of the cross, is of the devil; and whosoever perverts the oracles of the Lord to his own lusts, and says that there is neither a resurrection nor a judgment, he is the first-born of Satan." D1 (To understand what is meant by "Christ has come in the flesh" read 1 John 4:2 and John 1:1 and 14.) **(PDF vol. 1, pg. 25)**

Ignatius, *Ante-Nicene Fathers: Volume I, Epistle of Ignatius to the Smyrnaeans,* Chapter V1:

> "Let no man deceive himself. Unless he believes that Christ Jesus has lived in the flesh, and shall confess His cross and passion, and the blood which He shed for the salvation of the world, he shall not obtain eternal life, whether he be a king, or a priest, or a ruler, or a private person, a master or a servant, a man or a woman." D1 **(PDF vol. 1, pg. 74)**

This salvation is through Christ alone.

Hermas, *Ante-Nicene Fathers: Volume II, Similitude Ninth,* Chapter XII:

> "A man cannot otherwise enter into the kingdom of God than by the name of His beloved Son." D1 **(PDF vol. 2, pg. 40)**

Topic Index

4. Jesus was bodily raised from the dead and He will return.

Clement of Rome, *Ante-Nicene Fathers: Volume I, The First Epistle of Clement to the Corinthians,* Chapter XXIV: **(PDF Vol. 1, pg. 7)**

> "Let us consider, beloved, how the Lord continually proves to us that there shall be a future resurrection, of which He has rendered the Lord Jesus Christ the first-fruits by raising Him from the dead." D1

Table of Contents pg 1, 2, 3, 4

Tertullian, *Ante-Nicene Fathers, Volume 3, On the Resurrection of the Flesh,* Chapter XLVIII:

> "He 'died according to the Scriptures,' and 'that He was buried according to the Scriptures,' no otherwise than in the flesh, you will also allow that it was in the flesh that He was raised from the dead. For the very same body which fell in death, and which lay in the sepulchre, did also rise again;" D1 **(PDF Vol. 3, pg. 1064)**

Justin Martyr, *Ante-Nicene Fathers: Volume I, Fragments of the Lost Work of Justin on the Resurrection,* Chapter IX: **(PDF Vol. 1, pg. 266)**

> "Why did He rise in the flesh in which He suffered, unless to show the resurrection of the flesh? And wishing to confirm this, when His disciples did not know whether to believe He had truly risen in the body, and were looking upon Him and doubting, He said to them, 'Ye have not yet faith, see that it is I'; and He let them handle Him, and showed them the prints of the nails in His hands. And when they were by every kind of proof persuaded that it was Himself, and in the body, they asked Him to eat with them, that they might thus still more accurately ascertain that He had in verity risen bodily; and He did eat honey-comb and fish. And when He had thus shown them that there is truly a resurrection of the flesh, wishing to show them this also, that it is not impossible for flesh to ascend into heaven (as He had said that our dwelling-place is in heaven), 'He was taken up into heaven while they beheld,' as He was in the flesh. D1

Justin Martyr, *Ante-Nicene Fathers: Volume I, Dialogue of Justin,* Chapter CX:

> "O unreasoning men! understanding not what has been proved by all these passages, that two advents of Christ have been announced: the one, in which He is set forth as suffering, inglorious, dishonoured, and crucified; but the other, in which He shall come from heaven with glory..." D1 **(PDF Vol. 1, pg. 221)**

Irenaeus, *Ante-Nicene Fathers: Volume I, Irenaeus Against Heresies,* Book 4, Ch. XXXIII:

> "All the prophets announced His two advents: the one, indeed, in which He became a man subject to stripes, and knowing what it is to bear infirmity, and sat upon the foal of an ass, and was a stone rejected by the builders, and was led as a sheep to the slaughter, and by the stretching forth of His hands destroyed Amalek; while He gathered from the ends of the earth into His Father's fold the children who were scattered abroad, and remembered His own dead ones who had formerly fallen asleep, and came down to them that He might deliver them:
> but the second in which He will come on the clouds, bringing on the day which burns as a furnace? and smiting the earth with the word of His mouth? and slaying the impious with the breath of His lips, and having a fan in His hands, and cleansing His floor, and gathering the wheat indeed into His barn, but burning the chaff with unquenchable fire." D1 **(PDF Vol. 1, pg. 464)**
> (Christ is coming on clouds Matthew 24:30, Acts 1:9-11, Revelation 1:7.)

Table of Contents pg 1, 2, 3, 4
Topic Index

5. **Salvation is a free gift that cannot be earned.**

Ignatius, *Ante-Nicene Fathers: Volume I, Epistle of Ignatius to the Magnesians,* Ch.X:

> "Let us not, therefore, be insensible to His kindness. For were He to reward us according to our works, we should cease to be. For 'if Thou, Lord, shalt mark iniquities, O Lord, who shall stand?' Let us therefore prove ourselves worthy of that name which we have received." D1 (Psalm 130:3) **(PDF Vol. 1, pg. 49)**

Irenaeus, *Ante-Nicene Fathers: Volume I, Irenaeus Against Heresies,* Book I, Chapter 2:

> "As far as concerned the apostasy, indeed, He redeems us righteously from it by His own blood; but as regards us who have been redeemed, [He does this] graciously. For we have given nothing to Him previously, nor does He desire anything from us, as if He stood in need of it..." D1 **(PDF Vol. 1, pg. 486)**

Clement of Alexandria, *Ante-Nicene Fathers: Volume II, The Stromata, or Miscellanies*, Book I, Chapter VII:

> "But Abraham was not justified by works, but by faith. It is therefore of no advantage to them after the end of life, even if they do good works now, if they have not faith." D1 **(PDF Vol. 2, pg. 275)**

Polycarp, *Ante-Nicene Fathers: Volume I, Epistle of Polycarp to the Philippians,* Chapter 1:

> "Our Lord Jesus Christ, who for our sins suffered even unto death, [but] 'whom God raised froth the dead, having loosed the bands of the grave. In whom, though now ye see Him not, ye believe, and believing, rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory;' into which joy many desire to enter, knowing that 'by grace ye are saved, not of works,' but by the will of God through Jesus Christ." D1 **(PDF Vol. 1, pg. 24)** (Ephesians 2:8-9.)

Topic Index

6. **Satan and Hell are not a myth, but a reality.**

Hermas, *Ante-Nicene Fathers: Volume II, Book Second, Commandments,* Commandment Twelfth, Chapter V:

> "The devil is hard, and holds sway over them. 'He cannot,' says he, 'hold sway over the servants of God, who with all their heart place their hopes in Him. The devil can wrestle against these, overthrow them he cannot. If, then, ye resist him, he will be conquered, and flee in disgrace from you. As many, therefore,' says he, 'as are empty, fear the devil, as possessing power.'" D1 **(PDF Vol. 2, pg. 21)** (James 4:7.)

Table of Contents pg 1, 2, 3, 4

Irenaeus, *Ante-Nicene Fathers: Volume I, Irenaeus Against Heresies,* Book 3, Ch.XXIII:

> "And this same thing does the Lord also say in the Gospel, to those who are found upon the left hand: 'Depart from me, ye cursed, into ever: lasting fire, which my Father hath prepared for the devil and his angels;' indicating that eternal fire was not originally prepared for man, but for him who beguiled man, and caused him to offend." D1 **(PDF Vol. 1, pg. 414)** (Matthew 25:41.)

So we see that the church does indeed still teach the same foundational doctrines as the early church did. The next key factor is, do we really believe these doctrines? Lots of people may believe these truths intellectually, but do they truly live in our hearts? Men of strong faith, such as the original disciples and others after them, were willing to die — martyrs for their faith. They believed these truths to be more than doctrinal, but rather as an absolute reality.

Topic Index

MORE INTERESTING QUOTATIONS

"Evaluating our faith: How shall I depend on Him for raising my body from the dust; and saving my soul at last; if I distrust Him for a crust of bread, towards my preservation?"
JOSEPH HALL (From *The Golden Treasury of Puritan Quotations*) D5

"There are many great truths which we do not deny, and which nevertheless we do not fully believe."
J. W. Alexander

"Belief is a wise wager. Granted that faith cannot be proved, what harm will come to you if you gamble on its truth and it proves false?….If you gain, you gain all; if you lose, you lose nothing. Wager, then, without hesitation, that He exists." Blaise Pascal

"All I have seen teaches me to trust the Creator for all I have not seen."
Ralph Waldo Emerson

"Feed your faith and your doubts will starve to death." Author Unknown

"I believe in Christ as I believe in the rising sun — not that I can see it, but that by it I can see everything." Author Unknown

"He that will believe only what he can fully comprehend, must have a very long head or a very short creed." Colton

"I am not afraid of those tender and scrupulous consciences who are ever cautious of professing and believing too much; if they are sincerely wrong, I forgive their errors and respect their integrity. The men I am afraid of are those who believe everything, subscribe to everything, and vote for everything." Shipley

"Some believe all that parents, tutors, and kindred believe. They take their principles by inheritance, and defend them as they would their estates, because they are born heirs to them."

Table of Contents pg 1, 2, 3, 4

Not all churches that call themselves Christian really are Christian. Therefore it is really important to know what your Church teaches about basic beliefs. The Bible tells us which beliefs are more important than others. For example your belief on the timing of the rapture is far less important what you believe about who Jesus is.

You can click on **"Is it important what a church teaches?"** to start reading at the beginning of this topic or use the page index to jump to the part that interest you most.

Topic Index

Overview of content in this section is as follows:

Is it important what a Church teaches? (pg. 180)

Warning about another gospel (pg.180)

Warning about false prophets (pg. 180)

Warning about another Jesus, gospel and Satan's representatives (pg. 181)

Warning about false teachers (pg. 181)

Jesus says they will die in their sins if they don't believe who he is (pg. 182)

Proverbs and a way which seems right and results in death (pg. 182)

Table of Contents pg 1, 2, 3, 4
Topic Index

IS IT IMPORTANT WHAT A CHURCH TEACHES?

Let's look to the Bible to find out whether or not what a church teaches is important, (All underline, bold, and italic emphasis in this chapter mine.)

Galatians 1:8-9:
"But even though we, or an angel from heaven, should preach to you a gospel contrary to that which we have preached to you, let him be accursed.
As we have said before, so I say again now, if any man is preaching to you a gospel contrary to that which you received, let him be accursed."

Do you think Paul would consider it important what a prophet or anyone else taught? (Verses 8 and 9)

Topic Index

Deuteronomy 13:1-5:
"If a prophet or a dreamer of dreams arises among you and **gives you a sign or a wonder,**
and the sign or the wonder comes true, concerning which he spoke to you, saying, **'Let us go after other gods** (whom you have not known) and let us serve them,'
you shall not listen to the words of that prophet or that dreamer of dreams; for the LORD your God is testing you to find out if you love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul.
You shall follow the LORD your God and fear Him; and you shall keep His commandments, listen to His voice, serve Him, and cling to Him.
But that prophet or that dreamer of dreams shall be put to death, because he has counseled rebellion against the LORD your God who brought you from the land of Egypt and redeemed you from the house of slavery, to seduce you from the way in which the LORD your God commanded you to walk. So you shall purge the evil from among you."

What if the prophet can do miracles, but he tells us of other Gods — should we listen to him? (Verses 1 to 3)
Does God take the matter of this prophet lightly? (Verse 5)
If the teachings about God or Jesus do not appear to be about the same God or Jesus spoken about in the Bible, is this following after other gods?

Table of Contents pg 1, 2, 3, 4
Topic Index

Corinthians 11:3-15:

"But I am afraid, lest as the serpent deceived Eve by his craftiness, your minds should be led astray from the simplicity and purity of devotion to Christ.

For if one comes and **preaches another Jesus whom we have not preached**, or you receive a different spirit which you have not received, **or a different gospel** which you have not accepted, you bear this beautifully.

For I consider myself not in the least inferior to the most eminent apostles.

But even if I am unskilled in speech, yet I am not so in knowledge; in fact, in every way we have made this evident to you in all things.

Or did I commit a sin in humbling myself that you might be exalted, because I preached the gospel of God to you without charge?

I robbed other churches, taking wages from them to serve you;

and when I was present with you and was in need, I was not a burden to anyone; for when the brethren came from Macedonia, they fully supplied my need, and in everything I kept myself from being a burden to you, and will continue to do so.

As the truth of Christ is in me, this boasting of mine will not be stopped in the regions of Achaia.

Why? Because I do not love you? God knows I do!

But what I am doing, I will continue to do, that I may cut off opportunity from those who desire an opportunity to be regarded just as we are in the matter about which they are boasting.

For such men are false apostles, deceitful workers, disguising themselves as apostles of Christ.

And no wonder, for even Satan disguises himself as an angel of light.

Therefore it is not surprising if his servants also disguise themselves as servants of righteousness; whose end shall be according to their deeds."

Was Paul concerned about teachings of Jesus or the Gospel? Verses 3 and 4
Can these false teachers appear as honest and religious people? Verses 13-15
Why was Paul afraid for the Corinthians? Verse 3
Why would Satan or his servants want to appear as servants of righteousness?

Topic Index

2 Peter2:1:

"But false prophets also arose among the people, just as **there will also be false teachers among you,** who will secretly **introduce destructive heresies**, even denying the Master who bought them, **bringing swift destruction upon themselves."**

Does Peter think that false teachings are a serious matter?

Table of Contents pg 1, 2, 3, 4
Topic Index

John 8:23-25:
"And He was saying to them, 'You are from below, I am from above; you are of this world, I am not of this world.
I said therefore to you, that you shall die in your sins; for **unless you believe that I am *He,* you shall die in your sins.'**
And so they were saying to Him, 'Who are You?' Jesus said to them, 'What have I been saying to you from the beginning?'"

10) Does Jesus seem to think that it is important to believe the truth about Him?

Topic Index

Proverbs 14:12:
"**There is a way which seems right to a man, but its end is the way of death."**

Is it wise to trust emotions or what may seem right? Verse 12

After reading these verses, have you reached a conclusion to whether or not it is important what a church teaches?

Why do you suppose Satan would want to introduce false prophets or false teachings about Who God or Jesus is?

Do you believe that it is important to know what the Bible says concerning Who God or Jesus is?

If the teachings of a church about who God or Jesus is are different than the teachings of the Bible, should you attend and support that church?

If you have difficulty in answering these questions please feel free to write and ask any question you might have. I encourage you to study the Bible. If any answer that I, or anybody else, gives does not agree with Scripture, it's WRONG. The Bible has proven itself time and time again. It is important to realize that if the Bible disagrees with what we believe, then it is *us* who are wrong, not the Bible!

Topic Index

Table of Contents pg 1, 2, 3, 4

There are tools that can really help to study and understand the Bible. These tools can make it much easier and faster. Some of these tools and practices are explained here.

You can click on **"Why should I study the Bible?"** to start reading at the beginning of this topic or use the page index to jump to the part that interest you most.

Overview of content in this section is as follows:

Why should I study the Bible & how do I go about it? (pg. 184)

Study the Bible to learn about Jesus and gain eternal life and other scripture showing use of the Bible (pg. 1840

Why are there so many versions of the Bible and which version of the Bible should I read? (p186)

Finding the answers to your questions in the Bible & The Holy Spirit teaches you (pg. 187)

Study Bibles (pg. 187)

Cross references (pg. 188)

Concordances (pg. 188)

Dictionaries (pg. 189)

Topical Bibles (pg. 189)

Bible Commentaries (pg. 189)

Software (pg. 190)

Application (pg. 190)

Table of Contents pg 1, 2, 3, 4
Topic Index

WHY SHOULD I STUDY THE BIBLE? AND HOW DO I GO ABOUT IT?

The fact that many people do not study the Bible shows that this is a subject that needs to be addressed.

The Bible itself tells us why we should study its Word:
2 Timothy 2:15 "Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth." (KJV)The "word of truth" is the Bible, and we are told to study it. Notice that this is not just a suggestion, but rather it is an instruction.

Clearly we are told to study the Scripture, but this does not tell us *why* we should study the Scripture. **The most important reason a person should study the Bible is to learn about Jesus. In Jesus there is eternal life and knowledge of the Father.** Carefully consider what Jesus said. Keep in mind that Jesus is the only religious leader in history who was described in detail before He was born. Jesus performed many miracles and offered them as evidence that He was Who He said He was (John 10:38). Jesus also predicted His own death and resurrection. Jesus then arose from the dead and appeared to hundreds of eyewitnesses over a period of forty days. No other religious leader in history has ever had these kinds of credentials! He is worth listening to!

John 5:37-40: "And the Father who sent Me, He has borne witness of Me. You have neither heard His voice at any time, nor seen His form. And you do not have His word abiding in you, for you do not believe Him whom He sent. You search the Scriptures, because you think that in them you have eternal life; and it is these that bear witness of Me; and you are unwilling to come to Me, that you may have life." (*Jesus speaking*)

John 20:31: "but these have been written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing you may have life in His name." (*John speaking*)

John 14:9-10: "Jesus said to him, 'Have I been so long with you, and yet you have not come to know Me, Philip? He who has seen Me has seen the Father; how do you say, 'Show us the Father'? Do you not believe that I am in the Father, and the Father is in Me?'"

Topic Index

Everything that God tells us to do in His written word is for our own benefit. Following are some Scriptures that show how studying the Scripture can be beneficial to us.

2 Timothy 3:16-17:"All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work."

Table of Contents pg 1, 2, 3, 4

Psalm 19:7: “The law of the LORD is perfect, restoring the soul; the testimony of the LORD is sure, making wise the simple.”

In the two previous verses we can see that the Bible is profitable for mankind. With the Word of God we can be equipped for every good work. Furthermore the Word of God restores the soul and makes wise the simple. In the verse below we find that treasuring God's word in our hearts will help us refrain from sin against God.

Psalm 119:9-11:“How can a young man keep his way pure? By keeping it according to Thy word. With all my heart I have sought Thee; do not let me wander from Thy commandments. Thy word I have treasured in my heart, that I may not sin against Thee.”

Consider carefully what Jesus says in the verse below.

Luke 6:46-49: "And why do you call Me, 'Lord, Lord,' and do not do what I say? Everyone who comes to Me, and hears My words, and acts upon them, I will show you whom he is like: he is like a man building a house, who dug deep and laid a foundation upon the rock; and when a flood rose, the torrent burst against that house and could not shake it, because it had been well built. But the one who has heard, and has not acted accordingly, is like a man who built a house upon the ground without any foundation; and the torrent burst against it and immediately it collapsed, and the ruin of that house was great."

Jesus tells us that those who do not act upon His words will suffer a great loss. How can you act upon His words without carefully considering what He said? This is another reason why we should study the Bible. In James we find a similar thought.

James1:22:“*But prove yourselves doers of the word, and not merely hearers who delude themselves.”*

Here we find that those who are not doers of the Word delude themselves. Once again, how can you be a doer of the Word, if you, in fact, do not know what the Word says?

This is by no means an exhaustive list. By studying the Bible one can come to know Jesus and the Father. Through Jesus one can gain eternal life. We also stand to gain wisdom, peace and direction in life. No one in the world loves you more than God. He left you specific instructions of how to know Him and live a fulfilling life. Considering this, do you think the Scriptures are at least worth reading? Are they worth studying?

Table of Contents pg 1, 2, 3, 4

Do you have questions about life? Well, the Bible has answers! Don't forget to pray! It is not desirable to have only “head” knowledge. Prayer causes us to focus on the One in Whom we need a close relationship. The Bible really does have answers to your questions about life. In order to find these answers you must become a student of Scripture. Many people do not know how to start. People sometimes wonder why there are so many versions of the Bible, and how to select the best version for study. Then, people don’t understand exactly how to search Scripture for the answers to their questions within the Bible. It my hope that this section will help answer these questions.

Topic Index

Why are there so many versions of the Bible, and which version of the Bible should I read?

The Bible was originally written in Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek. When translating from these languages to English, scholars found more than one way to say the same thing. Additionally, our English language has evolved since the first English printing of the Bible. Therefore scholars constantly go back to the original language to seek a good translation into the common speech that is in use at the time. Example: the King James Version is a good translation of the Bible. However it contains words that we no longer use, and are confusing to some. Consider 1 Kings 2:26 in King James; it contains the word "Barest". This is a correct translation of the Hebrew word *" nasa' “.* "Barest", however, is an English word we no longer use. In the New American Standard version, this Hebrew word is translated "carried" which is also a correct translation, but is currently a more common word in our English language. There are several popular good translations that people use today. Some of these are the “King James” (KJV), the “New King James” (NKJV), the “New American Standard” (NASB), the “Revised Standard” (RSV), the “American Standard” (ASV), and the New International (NIV).

There are also paraphrased Bibles. Unlike the translations listed above, they are not word-for-word translations. Rather, they try to put into an easy, readable form what the translators believe the author in the Bible was trying to say. In other words, many parts of the Bible are interpreted for you. It is because of this that I believe that they do not make good study Bibles — although they do make good commentaries. The most popular of these is the Living Bible (TLB).

There are two versions of the Bible that most Greek and Hebrew scholars would agree are very poor translations. One is the “New World’s Translation”, printed by the Watchtower Society; and the other is the "Inspired Version" put out by the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints. I do not recommend that anybody uses these for studying the Scriptures.

Many people develop their own preferences as to which versions they like the best. The author (Robert Kiser) prefers the New American Standard — but for an in-depth study of a particular passage, I sometimes find that it is helpful to read more than one version. Sometimes when the same thing is said using slightly different wording it helps in the understanding of what the author is trying to get across.

Table of Contents pg 1, 2, 3, 4

Topic Index

The key to finding the answers to your questions is spending time in the Word of God (the Bible), and prayer. Some things in the Bible may seem confusing at first. The more you read and contemplate them while seeking the Lord, the more it will start to sink in and make sense. It is also helpful to know how to study and know where to look.

There are several tools that aid in the studying of the Bible. This does not mean that a person needs these to be able to understand the Bible. People have gotten along without these aids and still gained wisdom from the Bible for centuries. **The Bible itself tells us the Holy Spirit is able to teach us.**

John 14:26: "But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all that I said to you."

I John 2:27: "And as for you, the anointing which you received from Him abides in you, and you have no need for anyone to teach you; but as His **anointing** teaches you about all things, and is true and is not a lie, and just as it has taught you, you abide in Him."

(from *Vine's Expository Dictionary of Biblical Words* — Anointing: "chrisma ^5545^, It is used only metaphorically in the NT; by metonymy, of the Holy Spirit, <1 John 2:20, **27**> That believers have 'an anointing from the Holy One' indicates that this annointing renders them holy, separating them to God. The passage teaches that the gift of the Holy Spirit is the all efficient means of enabling believers to possess knowledge of the truth.")[C4]

As stated earlier, you can read and learn from the Bible without study aids. However this does not mean that aids are useless. Owning the study aids that will be covered in this chapter will not make you a better Bible student, but they will make studying a little easier and more convenient. I have liked to write for some time now. Eventually I started using a typewriter. Then I got a computer and started using a word processor. Did having these tools make me a better writer? Not at all; but the tools *have* made things easier and more convenient. In a similar fashion, this is also true of Bible study aids, such as study Bibles, cross-references, concordances, dictionaries, topical Bibles, and commentaries.

Topic Index

Study Bibles: Study Bibles come in various popular translations — KJV, NIV, NAS, et cetera, as covered previously. The only difference between a study Bible and another Bible of the same version is that the study Bible will include extra information. A good study Bible will have plenty of cross-references, a small concordance, maps, outlines, historical information, and commentary. Popular study Bibles includes the Open Bible, the Life Application Bible, Thompson's Chain Reference Bible, and the Ryrie Study Bible. Keep in mind that the comments made on certain verses are the author's interpretation of that passage. Authors' comments may or may not reflect an accurate interpretation of Scripture (see "Commentaries").

Table of Contents pg 1, 2, 3, 4

Topic Index

Cross-references: Cross-references are references that correlate in some way to the passage that you are reading at the time. Often by looking up these cross-references you will find that the Bible interprets itself. One passage that seems confusing to you may be explained by another passage somewhere else. Or the cross-reference supplied may simply give a little added information. As I already mentioned a good study Bible will contain cross-references. There is a very useful book titled *The Treasury of Scripture Knowledge*. This book breaks every verse in the King James Version into different categories. Then it gives cross-references for each category. It contains nearly 1,000,000 cross-references; far more cross-references than you will find in any study Bible.

Topic Index

Concordances: A Bible Concordance is an alphabetical listing of words found in the Bible. The "word" will be in **bold** or *italics* within a partial quote as it appears in the Bible. A good study Bible will have a small concordance in the reference section in the back of the book. An exhaustive concordance will contain every word in the Bible in alphabetical order. There are concordances that correlate with various versions of the Bible. An exhaustive concordance has several uses. Imagine you hear a verse quoted by someone. Later you decide that you would like to look up that verse, to read the whole context. Simply pick out a key word in the verse and look that word up in your concordance. You will find a list of every place that word is used in the Bible. You can just go through the list until you recognize the quote that you are looking for. Then turn in your Bible to the reference provided in the concordance, and begin reading. Another way you might use a concordance is to help you answer a question you might have about a certain topic, like salvation, marriage, or sin. Simply think of a word that may be mentioned in a discussion about your topic. Then look that word up in the concordance to find references in the Bible where that word is used. In this respect it is kind of like using the yellow pages in your phone book! Yet another use for the concordance: during your study of the Bible, you encounter a word, and you're not sure of its meaning. Besides looking the word up in a dictionary, you can also look in the concordance. In this way you can study the various ways that the word in question is used throughout the Bible. Some of the exhaustive concordances will contain the Strong's numbering system. The Strong's numbering system is simply a number which is given to each Greek or Hebrew word in the Old and New Testament. To use this system, look up the word in question in English. Pick out the verse in which the word is used. Next to this is a number. Now, look up that number in the Greek or Hebrew dictionary at the back of the concordance (Hebrew for the Old Testament and Greek for the New Testament). There you will find a short definition of the Greek or Hebrew word that was translated into English in the Bible.

There is a concordance that is different than the ones I just described. It is called the *Englishman's Concordance*. This concordance is based upon the Strong's numbering system and enables you to find every Greek or Hebrew word in the Bible, regardless of how it is translated in English. For example, Psalm.82:6 uses the word "gods", #430 in the Strong's, when speaking of some unjust judges. This same Hebrew word (#430) is also translated as "judges" in

Exodus.22:9. Jesus also quoted this passage in the 82nd Psalm in John 10:34. We gain some insight to the context of this passage by realizing that these people are not literally "gods" as compared to the one true God. They are called "gods" in respect to their position as judges. This is found both in the context and the definition and use of the Hebrew word #430. As I already mentioned you can gain insight to the meaning of an English word by studying the various ways that it is used. With the *Englishman's Concordance* you can gain some insight to the original Greek or Hebrew word. This is done simply by studying the various ways that it is translated into English.

Topic Index

Dictionaries: A good dictionary, such as Webster's, is extremely helpful. We often read over words such as “holy”, “grace”, “faith”, and “sanctification” without truly understanding what the word means. The passage that you are studying will make more sense when you understand the meaning of the words used in it. Look up some key words in the verse in the dictionary, it may surprise you. There are also Bible dictionaries. There is a difference between a Bible dictionary and a regular dictionary. A Bible dictionary makes use of the Greek and Hebrew that the word in question was originally translated from. The Bible dictionary will often give you other references in Scripture. The Bible dictionary will also sometimes give added information on history, customs, politics, and other useful information to provide clarity. There are many good Bible dictionaries — *Nelson's Bible Dictionary* is one of them.

Topic Index

Topical Bibles: A topical Bible is an alphabetical listing of subjects found in the Bible. It has some advantage over an exhaustive concordance. Let’s say, for example, that you want to study what the Bible has to say about marriage. There are places in the Bible where marriage is being discussed, but the words "married or marriage" are not used. The passage may mention the husband or wife. The topical Bible groups these passages together for you giving you references throughout the Bible where your subject is being discussed. *Nave's Topical Bible* is one that I find very useful.

Topic Index

Bible Commentaries: A commentary is a book or notes of a particular author’s interpretation of the verses within a particular book in the Bible. Many Bible scholars have written commentaries to explain and interpret the Scripture for you. In a similar fashion this is what a pastor does in church. The pastor explains and interprets passages in the Bible for you, and often gives application as well. My writing would also fall into this category. A commentary is a useful tool because it can bring things to your attention that you may not have otherwise thought about. The commentator does a lot of research and hopefully spends a lot of time in prayer as well. Because of this they can often provide useful insight to a particular passage or subject. By reading or listening to a commentator you will also be subjected to what the commentator holds to be true. Because the commentator is human, they can and do make mistakes.

Therefore it is wise to study the Scriptures for yourself as well. The pastor or commentator can help you in the learning process, but part of the responsibility falls on the student. The people of Berea were commended because they eagerly accepted what the Apostle Paul had to say, but it did not end there. They also searched the Scriptures daily to see if what the Apostle Paul was teaching was true. (*Acts 17:11: "Now these were more noble-minded than those in Thessalonica, for they received the word with great eagerness, **examining the Scriptures daily, to see whether these things were so."**)*It would be wise to follow the example of these people of Berea. Don't just take some commentator's word for something. Your salvation and spiritual growth are important. Check out what is taught by your pastor or commentator for yourself. Is what you are being taught in the Bible? Is it being taken out of context? These things you must decide for yourself. This is true of my writing as well. Look up the references provided and see if what we say is true. Cults thrive on people who are unwilling to study or think for themselves. Do not be afraid to question a teaching. You learn by asking questions, but make sure what you believe is well-grounded in God's written Word. If it is not in the Bible, on what grounds can one establish it as divine truth? Overall basically good commentaries include *Matthew Henry's Commentary on the Whole Bible*, *The Bible Knowledge Commentary*, and *The MacArthur Bible Commentary.* I also believe that the "Living Bible" makes a good commentary. Yet, do not misunderstand — I am not saying that everything in these books is true. I am saying that as a whole, on major doctrines such as God, Jesus, and your salvation, these are good commentaries.

Topic Index

Software: Bible software has some advantages. For one, books are often less expensive in a software format. The price of volumes of books can add up quickly. Books can be produced on a CD for much less than they can be bound into paper books. Therefore if you are buying several books as a package, you may save money by looking for a software version. In addition, the software version usually contains search capabilities. This means that you can find any word or phrase within volumes of books with the click of a button. Software can be a great advantage to a writer. Portions of books can be copied to the word processor simply by highlighting them and clicking a couple of buttons. I have several CDs that I use for research and study. *The PC Study Bible, Reference Library Plus* by Bible Soft is my favorite and most-used CD. I also find my software by Logos very helpful.

Topic Index

Application: As I stated earlier, to find the answers to your questions, spend time in the Bible and in prayer. Most questions would be categorized as a topical study. Ask yourself if your question was to be labeled as a topic, what would it be titled? Now look that word up in the topical bible and concordance. Study the passages that are referred to and look up the cross references provided. Many questions can be answered simply by doing this. This can often lead into word studies. If the passage you are referred to uses what seems to be a key word unfamiliar to you, look it up. Find out what the word means. How else is this word used in the Bible? For these types of questions use your dictionaries and concordance.

Table of Contents pg 1, 2, 3, 4

There is no substitute for studying the Bible in full context. As a general rule if you want to be physically healthy you feed yourself good food and exercise your body. If you want to be spiritually healthy, then feed yourself on the Word of God, pray, and exercise your mind (Deuteronomy 8:3, Matthew 4:4 and 22:37, Luke 11:1-13 and 12:29-31, Romans 12:2, Philippians 4:8, James 1:5).When you are studying chapters and books in the Bible ask yourself questions. Who is speaking in this passage and who is being spoken to? What is the main point that is being discussed? When did this take place or when is it going to take place? Where is this taking place? Look at a map to see. Why did this happen? Most important how does this relate to me? What can I learn from this?

Always start with prayer. Ask the Lord to reveal His truth to you and help you to apply what you learn. Next read the entire passage in context. Perhaps read it more than once, in different versions of the Bible. Even if it is a familiar passage don't assume that you already know everything it says. I have learned from passages by going back to them even after I had already memorized them! Look up the cross-references and let the Bible interpret itself. Look up definitions of key words — how are they used elsewhere?

I recommend that you read the commentaries last. This way you won't be approaching the passage with pre-conceived ideas. When you do read the commentaries, don't forget to look for historical information. Sometimes this will give you a better understanding of why something in the passage was stated.

Topic Index

Table of Contents pg 1, 2, 3, 4

The Bible tells us we should do our part in spreading the gospel. Does this mean that we should debate with loved ones who disagree? What does the Bible say about this?

You can click on "**Why should a Christian be able to defend their faith?"** to start reading at the beginning of this topic or use the page index to jump to the part that interest you most.

Why should a Christian be able to defend their Faith?

Overview of content in this section is as follows:

Why should a Christian be able to defend their Faith? (pg. 193)

Testimony verses Testimony (pg. 193)

Study to show your-self approved (pg. 193)

Contend for the faith (pg. 193)

Be ready in season and out of season to reprove (pg. 194)

Always being ready to make a defense with gentleness and reverence (pg. 194)

Guilty for not warning others (pg. 195)

Table of Contents pg 1, 2, 3, 4

Why should Christians be able to defend their faith?
Why speak out against those Churches which are Cults?

Often I have heard people, from cults and Christianity alike, tell me that they did not feel that it was right for them to debate the Gospel with anyone. Their reasoning seems to be, "I have the truth and if the person is willing to listen and accept what I have to say then I will tell them, otherwise forget it." It is my opinion that whether you are a Mormon, a member of another cult, or a believer in historic Christianity, an attitude such as this one is not very well thought-out. Obviously Mormonism and historic Christianity are not both "right" and "true", yet both believe they have the truth. People from both religions can offer you very sincere testimonies. So where does that leave you? If a person's eternal destiny really depends on the truth of his or her religion, isn't it worth pursuing a discussion of differing views? — At least to the point at which you both agree to disagree? I am not saying that you should have heated arguments that only develop animosity. Many people are willing to listen to your side of the debate if you will listen to theirs also. A Mormon (or anyone else) who believes he knows the truth and suddenly accepts what the believer in historic Christianity has to say concerning God, Jesus, and salvation — without searching the Scriptures and other sources of fact — then that "believer" was not stable in the belief and will probably soon be carried off by some other teaching. The same is true if the roles are reversed. The common ground between these two religions is the Bible, and any book that both people may consider noteworthy, such as a dictionary.

My opinion on this matter is not enough, though. What does Scripture say about this?

Topic Index

2 Timothy 2:15 (KJV):
"**Study** to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth."

What can we do to help us rightly divide the word of truth? (Verse 15)
Was this just a suggestion or an instruction?

Topic Index

Jude 1:3-4:
"Beloved, while I was making every effort to write you about our common salvation, I felt the necessity to write to you appealing that you **contend earnestly for the faith** which was once for all delivered to the saints.

For certain persons have crept in unnoticed, those who were long beforehand marked out for this condemnation, ungodly persons who turn the grace of our God into licentiousness and deny our only Master and Lord, Jesus Christ."

("Contend", according to *Webster's College Edition New World Dictionary*, means "to strive in debate or controversy; argue; dispute.)

What does it mean to contend earnestly for the faith? (Jude 1:3)
Was this just a suggestion or an instruction?

Topic Index

2 Timothy 4:1-3:
"I solemnly charge you in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who is to judge the living and the dead, and by His appearing and His kingdom:
preach the word; be ready in season and out of season; **reprove**, rebuke, exhort, with great patience and instruction.
For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but wanting to have their ears tickled, they will accumulate for themselves teachers in accordance to their own desires..."

("Reprove", according to Webster's, means "to refute; disprove".)

When should you be ready to preach the word? (Verse 2)
What does reprove mean and why should you do it? (Verses 2 and 3)
Was this just a suggestion or an instruction?

Topic Index

1 Peter 3:15
"but sanctify Christ as Lord in your hearts, always being ready to make **a defense** to everyone who asks you to give an account for the hope that is in you, yet with gentleness and reverence;"

("Defense", according to Webster's, means "a defending; guarding against attack; an argument to justify or vindicate".**)**

What does it mean to make a defense for the hope that is in you?
When should you be ready to do this?
In what frame of mind should this be carried out?
Is this just a suggestion or an instruction?

Ezekiel 33:1-9:

"And the word of the LORD came to me saying,

'Son of man, speak to the sons of your people, and say to them, 'If I bring a sword upon a land, and the people of the land take one man from among them and make him their watchman;

and he sees the sword coming upon the land, and he blows on the trumpet and warns the people,

then he who hears the sound of the trumpet and does not take warning, and as word comes and takes him away, his blood will be on his own head.

He heard the sound of the trumpet, but did not take warning; his blood will be on himself. But had he taken warning, he would have delivered his life.

But if the watchman sees the sword coming and does not blow the trumpet, and the people are not warned, and a sword comes and takes a person from them, he is taken away in his iniquity; but his blood I will require from the watchman's hand.'

'Now as for you, son of man, I have appointed you a watchman for the house of Israel; so you will hear a message from My mouth, and give them warning from Me.

When I say to the wicked, 'O wicked man, you shall surely die,' and you do not speak to warn the wicked from his way, that wicked man shall die in his iniquity, but his blood I will require from your hand.

But if you on your part warn a wicked man to turn from his way, and he does not turn from his way, he will die in his iniquity; but you have delivered your life."

12) Did God consider it important for the Prophet Ezekiel to warn the wicked?

Acts 18:5-6:

"But when Silas and Timothy came down from Macedonia, Paul began devoting himself completely to the word, solemnly testifying to the Jews that Jesus was the Christ.

And when they resisted and blasphemed, he shook out his garments and said to them, 'Your blood be upon your own heads! I am clean. From now on I shall go to the Gentiles.'"

Does Paul seem to assume the same responsibility that God placed on Ezekiel when He responded "your blood be on your own heads"? (Ezekiel 33:1-9 and Acts 18:6)

We are warned of false teachings and false prophets in Matthew 24:24-25, 2 Peter 2:1-2, as well as many other places. In your opinion do you think it is important to warn others who have fallen into the trap of believing a false teaching?

Are their souls worth your debating with them? Praying for them? Loving them?

I would like to end this section by asking you to picture something in your mind. Imagine that your neighbors' house has caught fire. You can see the smoke and the flames starting to flicker at the rear of the house. Your neighbor is out in front of the house watering the lawn. Should you run over and tell him that the house is on fire? What if he doesn't believe you? Or worse yet, he might become offended because you pointed out what he should have seen, and your neighbor will stop talking to you. Does it seem ridiculous not to warn anyway? Of course it does! But we are in a spiritual war. We have neighbors who need to know the truth in spite of our own fears of rejection. Contend for the faith? YES— but remember to do it with love. Your neighbor is not the enemy — the fire or / the lie is!

Topic Index

Table of Contents pg 1, 2, 3, 4

We have all at one time or another wondered why our prayer was not answered. We have all had other questions about prayer. What is praying in the spirit? What does it mean to ask in Jesus name? These are things that will be addressed in this study on prayer.

You can click on **prayer** to start reading at the beginning or use the page index to jump to the part that interest you most.

Overview of content in this section is as follows:

PRAYER (pg. 198)
What is prayer? (pg. 198)
To whom should we pray? (pg. 198)
Why should we pray? (pg. 199)

There is Power in prayer. (pg. 200)
Prayer has raised the dead. (pg. 200)
Prayer is used to cast out demons.
Prayer stopped the rain for 3 1/2 years (pg. 200)
Angels sent in response to prayer (pg. 200)

When should we pray? (pg. 201)

Does God always answer prayer? (pg. 202)

Does this mean that God will never help an unbeliever? (pg. 203)

How should we pray? (pg. 203)

Why we do not receive from the Lord. (pg. 205)
Sometimes the answer is NO! (pg. 205)

What does it mean to ask in his name? (pg. 206)
What is praying in the spirit? (pg. 208)

What is the correlation between prayer and faith? (pg. 208)

The Bible shows it is faith in the Lord, not just faith in the request. (pg. 209)

Does this mean that God will not help the believer if there is a lack of faith? (pg. 210)

Beware of what is a contradiction to the word of the Lord (pg. 211)

Persistency in prayer (pg. 213)

Table of Contents pg 1, 2, 3, 4

I suppose that to write about how to pray a prayer that will receive an answer may seem somewhat of an arrogant position to take. I certainly do not have the monopoly on prayer. I think the key is not so much *how* we pray as it is that we *do* pray — and pray from the heart. In Mark 10:15 we are told, "whoever does not receive the kingdom of God like a child shall not enter it at all." We are also told that as Christians we have received a Spirit of adoption as sons of the Father, by which we cry out, "Abba! Father!" (Romans 8:15). Abba is the word framed by the lips of infants. When we view God as our Father and ourselves as His children, it is easy to approach Him; yet there is also a sense of fear when we know we have done wrong. As humans we can see that children can both love and fear their Father, depending upon their behavior. In Scripture we can see that love, fear, and discipline are all part of a Christian's relationship with God (1 John 3:1, Proverbs 1:7, Hebrews 5:12-14). We as Christians cannot expect to nurture our relationship with our Father without communicating with Him. As the saying goes, "seven days without prayer makes one weak". We will examine some of what the Bible says about prayer, but keep in mind that it is not a matter of using a certain formula to get a desirable answer to our prayer. More importantly, we should approach our Father as a child would and communicate with Him so that our relationship with Him is alive and healthy.

WHAT IS PRAYER?

Random House, *Webster's College Dictionary*, 1996, page 1060: “pray v., prayed, praying. —v.t. to offer devout petition, praise, thanks, etc., to (God or an object of worship). 2. to offer (a prayer). 3. to make earnest petition to (a person).” E11

Random House, *Webster's College Dictionary*, 1996, page 1060: “prayer n.1. a devout petition to God or an object of worship. 2. a spiritual communion with God or an object of worship, as in supplication, thanksgiving, or adoration. 3. the act or practice of praying to God or an object of worship.” E11

I find it interesting that in the dictionary prayer is coupled with worship. Perhaps developing this attitude could greatly improve our prayers. Notice also that the dictionary included giving “thanks and adoration”, not just making petitions.

Topic Index

TO WHOM SHOULD WE PRAY?

Our prayer will not help us much if we pray to one that is incapable of answering that prayer. Some people may pray to Buddha, or to one of the apostles or early saints. But Scripture tells us to pray to the Father through Jesus. We are not told to pray to anybody else. In fact we are told that Jesus is the only means by which we can access the Father. Jesus is the one speaking in the following verses:

Matthew 6:6: "But you, when you pray, go into your inner room, and when you have shut your door, pray to your Father who is in secret, and your Father who sees in secret will repay you.:

Table of Contents pg 1, 2, 3, 4

Matthew 6:9: "Pray, then, in this way: 'Our Father who art in heaven, Hallowed be Thy name."

John 15:16: "You did not choose Me, but I chose you, and appointed you, that you should go and bear fruit, and that your fruit should remain, that whatever you ask of the Father in My name, He may give to you."

John 14:13: "And whatever you ask in My name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son."

John 16:23: "And in that day you will ask Me no question. Truly, truly, I say to you, if you shall ask the Father for anything, He will give it to you in My name."

John 14:6: "Jesus said to him, 'I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father, but through Me.'"

Topic Index

WHY SHOULD WE PRAY?

This may at first seem like a ridiculous question to some, but considered this question for a minute: Since God knows everything, including all of my thoughts and the motives of my heart; then why must I communicate to Him that which He already knows? I have found experientially that everything that God tells me to do is actually for my own good. By praying to the Lord, my attention is focused upon Him, and not so much on myself. When my focus is on Him rather than on myself, I am less likely to stumble and fall. When Peter tried to walk on water, he was fine until he took his eyes off Jesus, and looked instead at the rough waves caused by the wind. Once Peter took his focus off of Jesus he began to sink (Matthew 14:24-32). There is also the matter of obedience — we are told we should pray, and so we should pray!

Luke 18:1: "Now He was telling them a parable to show that at all times they ought to pray and not to lose heart."

Mark 14:38: "Keep watching and praying, that you may not come into temptation; the spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak."

Colossians 4:2: "Devote yourselves to prayer, keeping alert in it with an attitude of thanksgiving."

Philippians 4:6: "Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God."

Table of Contents pg 1, 2, 3, 4
Topic Index

THERE IS POWER IN PRAYER

Prayer has raised the dead

I Kings 17:20-22: "And he called to the LORD and said, 'O LORD my God, hast Thou also brought calamity to the widow with whom I am staying, by causing her son to die?' Then he stretched himself upon the child three times, and called to the LORD, and said, 'O LORD my God, I pray Thee, let this child's life return to him.' And the LORD heard the voice of Elijah, and the life of the child returned to him and he revived."

THERE IS POWER IN PRAYER
Prayer is used to cast out demons.

Matthew 17:18-21: "And Jesus rebuked him, and the demon came out of him, and the boy was cured at once. Then the disciples came to Jesus privately and said, 'Why could we not cast it out?' And He said to them, 'Because of the littleness of your faith; for truly I say to you, if you have faith as a mustard seed, you shall say to this mountain, 'Move from here to there,' and it shall move; and nothing shall be impossible to you. But **this kind does not go out except by prayer and fasting**.'"

THERE IS POWER IN PRAYER
Prayer stopped the rain for 3-1/2 years.

James 5:16-18: "Therefore, confess your sins to one another, and pray for one another, so that you may be healed. **The effective prayer of a righteous man can accomplish much**. Elijah was a man with a nature like ours, and he prayed earnestly that it might not rain; and it did not rain on the earth for three years and six months. And he prayed again, and the sky poured rain, and the earth produced its fruit."

THERE IS POWER IN PRAYER
Angels were sent in response to prayer.

Daniel 9:21: "while I was still speaking in prayer, then the man Gabriel, whom I had seen in the vision previously, came to me in my extreme weariness about the time of the evening offering."

Table of Contents pg 1, 2, 3, 4

Daniel 10:12-14: "Then he said to me, 'Do not be afraid, Daniel, for from the first day that you set your heart on understanding this and on humbling yourself before your God, your words were heard, and I have come in response to your words. But the prince of the kingdom of Persia was withstanding me for twenty-one days; then behold, Michael, one of the chief princes, came to help me, for I had been left there with the kings of Persia. Now I have come to give you an understanding of what will happen to your people in the latter days, for the vision pertains to the days yet future.'"

There are numerous accounts of the results because of prayer. Not all answered prayers are as dramatic as raising the dead, casting out demons, stopping the rain, or having angels sent to speak to the one praying. However this does show that if these types of prayers can be answered then our lesser problems can be easily dealt with by praying.

Topic Index

WHEN SHOULD WE PRAY?

We should pray before eating, when in need, when thankful, without ceasing. In other words we should pray all of the time.

Mark 8:6: "And He directed the multitude to sit down on the ground; and taking the seven loaves, He gave thanks and broke them, and started giving them to His disciples to serve to them, and they served them to the multitude."

Acts 27:35: "And having said this, he took bread and gave thanks to God in the presence of all; and he broke it and began to eat."

1 Thessalonians 5:16-18: "Rejoice always; pray without ceasing; in everything give thanks; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus."

Colossians 4:2: "Devote yourselves to prayer, keeping alert in it with an attitude of thanksgiving**."**

There is no wrong time to pray. And, when you remember the story of Jonah (swallowed by a fish, praying from the belly of the fish, and then being vomited up on shore), or the reports of dead being raised to life — then you begin to realize that it is also *never too late* to pray. Sometimes, Christians tend to live by the rule, "If all else fails, then pray." Prayer should not be our last resort, and our prayers should include more than a list of things we wish to receive

Table of Contents pg 1, 2, 3, 4
Topic Index

DOES GOD ALWAYS ANSWER PRAYER?

Often I have heard the phrase, "God always answers prayer, but sometimes the answer is 'No!'" It is true that sometimes the answer is "No," but God does not always answer every prayer.
Sometimes God refuses to listen to the prayer.

Isaiah 1:11-20: "'What are your multiplied sacrifices to me?' Says the LORD. 'I have had enough of burnt offerings of rams, and the fat of fed cattle. And I take no pleasure in the blood of bulls, lambs, or goats. When you come to appear before me, who requires of you this trampling of My courts? Bring your worthless offerings no longer, incense is an abomination to me. New moon and sabbath, the calling of assemblies-- I cannot endure iniquity and the solemn assembly. I hate your new moon festivals and your appointed feasts, they have become a burden to me. I am weary of bearing them. **So when you spread out your hands in prayer, I will hide My eyes from you, yes, even though you multiply prayers, I will not listen**. Your hands are covered with blood. Wash yourselves, make yourselves clean; remove the evil of your deeds from My sight. Cease to do evil, Learn to do good; seek justice, reprove the ruthless; defend the orphan, plead for the widow. Come now, and let us reason together,' says the LORD, 'Though your sins are as scarlet, they will be as white as snow; though they are red like crimson, they will be like wool. If you consent and obey, you will eat the best of the land; But if you refuse and rebel, you will be devoured by the sword.' Truly, the mouth of the LORD has spoken."

In this passage we see that God said He would not listen to these people even though they multiply their prayers. Why? He is fed up with them carrying out a religious ceremony of sacrifices and burning incense when their hearts are far from Him. God declares that their hands are "covered in blood", and they are continually doing what is evil. Notice even though God declares that He will not listen to their prayers He says "Come now, and let us reason together," I would like you to think again about God being the Father and His people being His children. If your child is continually getting into all kinds of trouble; are you going to listen to the child's vain excuses? What if your child refuses to even admit wrongdoing, even when caught? Suppose the child then wants a ride over to a friend's house, so they can play? Even though you love and would like to please your child, you probably will not give into his or her wishes until the child's bad behavior is dealt with. This is what God is doing in this passage. God refuses to listen to the prayers until the people's behavior is dealt with. God is willing to reason with them, but until the people are also willing to reason with Him, He will not listen! Following are some other passages where we can see that there are times when God will not listen. In each case the reason why God will not listen is because of improper behavior and lack of repentance on the part of the people.

Proverbs 21:13: "He who shuts his ear to the cry of the poor will also cry himself and not be answered.

Ezekiel 8:18: "Therefore, I indeed shall deal in wrath. My eye will have no pity nor shall I spare; and though they cry in My ears with a loud voice, yet I shall not listen to them."

Table of Contents pg 1, 2, 3, 4

Proverbs 28:9: “He who turns away his ear from listening to the law, even his prayer is an abomination.”

(See also: 1 Samuel 8:18, 2 Samuel 22:42, Psalm 18:41, Psalm 109:7, Jeremiah 7:16, Jeremiah 11:11.)

Topic Index

DOES THIS MEAN THAT GOD WILL NEVER HELP AN UNBELIEVER?

No. In fact, God does his work in a world that is already condemned and prepared for destruction (John 3:18-19, Mark 16:16, 2 Peter 3:7-10), If He refused to work in the lives of unbelievers, no one would ever be saved — not that salvation is always the outcome of God working in an unbeliever’s life. In Luke 17:12-19 we read of ten lepers that Jesus healed. Only one of them gave thanks and glory to God. Are we to believe that the other nine were believers who did not give thanks and glory to God? Rather, it seems to me, God healed them in spite of their lack of commitment to Him. We are told to imitate God and love our enemies and be kind to them even as God is.

Matthew 5:44-45: "But I say to you, love your enemies, and pray for those who persecute you in order that you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven; for He causes His sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous.”

Jesus also can be seen associating with sinners. His purpose? His purpose is to call sinners to Himself. Jesus won people to himself not just through words, but through acts of love.

Mark 2:16-17: “And when the scribes of the Pharisees saw that He was eating with the sinners and tax-gatherers, they began saying to His disciples, ‘Why is He eating and drinking with tax-gatherers and sinners?’ And hearing this, Jesus said to them, ‘It is not those who are healthy who need a physician, but those who are sick; I did not come to call the righteous, but sinners.’”

Topic Index

HOW SHOULD WE PRAY?

We have already seen that God listens to those who are willing to listen to reason from him and be an obedient child. I would like to remind each of us at this point that there is no pattern or formula for every prayer. What is important is that we pray from our hearts and are willing to listen and respond to God's direction.

Table of Contents pg 1, 2, 3, 4

Matthew 6:5-13: "And when you pray, you are not to be as the hypocrites, for they love to stand and pray in the synagogues and on the street corners, in order to be seen by men. Truly I say to you, they have their reward in full. But you, when you pray, go into your inner room, and when you have shut your door, pray to your Father who is in secret, and your Father who sees in secret will repay you. And when you are praying, do not use meaningless repetition, as the Gentiles do, for they suppose that they will be heard for their many words. Therefore do not be like them; for your Father knows what you need, before you ask Him. Pray, then, in this way: 'Our Father, who art in Heaven, Hallowed be Thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done, On earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. And do not lead us into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For Thine is the kingdom, and power, and the glory, forever. Amen.'"

First we are told not to be as the hypocrites, who pray only to be seen by others. God is not interested in how religious you can be, but rather in what is on your heart. Repeating even a good prayer over and over is useless, if it is not from your heart. In this passage Jesus told them to go into their inner room and shut the door to pray. This is an illustration in contrast to praying only to be seen by men, as the religious hypocrite does. Jesus can be seen praying with others present in several passages. The point is not to pray only to be seen by man, but rather to communicate to God that which is on your heart.

Next Jesus gives an example of an appropriate prayer. There is a lot that could be said about this prayer, but for now I will show a brief break down that I see in this prayer:

"Our Father who art in Heaven, Hallowed be Thy name.
Focus on and praise to God.
"Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done, On earth as it is in
heaven. Focus on His will.
"Give us this day our daily bread...

"And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors.
Spiritual needs.
"And do not lead us into temptation, but deliver us from evil.
Deliverance.
"For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen."
Praise.

I do not believe that Jesus intended for us to merely recite this prayer. There are several examples in the Bible of people praying to God. The prayers are heartfelt supplications, and not just mechanical recitations. We see other prayers in the Bible and they do not just mechanically recite a given prayer. I think Jesus was using this prayer to illustrate some essential points that should be included in prayer.

Table of Contents pg 1, 2, 3, 4

Luke 18:10-14 "Two men went up into the temple to pray, one a Pharisee, and the other a tax-gatherer. The Pharisee stood and was praying thus to himself, 'God, I thank Thee that I am not like other people: swindlers, unjust, adulterers, or even like this tax-gatherer. I fast twice a week; I pay tithes of all that I get.' But the tax-gatherer, standing some distance away, was even unwilling to lift up his eyes to heaven, but was beating his breast, saying, 'God, be merciful to me, the sinner!' "I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other; for everyone who exalts himself shall be humbled, but he who humbles himself shall be exalted."

This passage shows that we are to come before God with humility and honesty, rather than arrogance and self-deception.

I John 3:22: "and whatever we ask we receive from Him, because we keep His commandments and do the things that are pleasing in His sight." (Receiving from God is a consequence that stems from obedience to God.)

Psalm 145:18-19: "The LORD is near to all who call upon Him, to all who call upon Him in truth. He will fulfill the desire of those who fear Him; He will also hear their cry and will save them."

Topic Index

WHY WE DO NOT RECEIVE FROM THE LORD

James 4:1-3: "What is the source of quarrels and conflicts among you? Is not the source your pleasures that wage war in your members? You lust and do not have; so you commit murder. And you are envious and cannot obtain; so you fight and quarrel. **You do not have because you do not ask. You ask and do not receive, because you ask with wrong motives**, so that you may spend it on your pleasures."

There are two reasons given here why we do not receive from the Lord.
Because we do not ask.
Because when we do ask, the motives of our hearts are wrong.

Topic Index

SOMETIMES THE ANSWER IS "NO"!

Sometimes God answers our prayers with a "NO". This may not mean that we had a selfish motive. It may simply be that God has a greater plan or purpose.

Matthew 26:39: "And He went a little beyond them, and fell on His face and prayed, saying, 'My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me; yet not as I will, but as Thou wilt.'"

Just before Jesus was led off to be tried and crucified, Peter took a sword cut of the ear of a soldier in an attempt to protect Him (John 18:3- 11). Jesus responded to Peter by saying, ***"Put the sword into the sheath; the cup which the Father has given Me, shall I not drink it?"*** Jesus' prayer in the garden was that "the cup" (His crucifixion) would pass from Him. As we know, Jesus did drink of the cup, and was crucified. Jesus' prayer as a man to be spared was a prayer that was not granted affirmatively; instead, He fulfilled the will of the Father. The greater purpose was our salvation.

Paul also made a request of the Lord to which the answer was "No".

Corinthians 12:7-9: "And because of the surpassing greatness of the revelations, for this reason, **to keep me from exalting myself**, there was given me a thorn in the flesh, a messenger of Satan **to buffet me** — to keep me from exalting myself! Concerning this I entreated the Lord three times that it might depart from me. And He has said to me, 'My grace is sufficient for you, for power is perfected in weakness.' Most gladly, therefore, I will rather boast about my weaknesses, that the power of Christ may dwell in me.

Paul was not delivered of his thorn in the flesh, but rather he was told God's grace was all that he needed. Paul tells us this was to keep him from exalting himself due to the surpassing greatness of the revelations he received. Many believe that perhaps Paul's "thorn in the flesh" was some sort of eye disease because of the following passages.

Galatians 4:13-15: "...but you know that it was because of a bodily illness that I preached the gospel to you the first time; and that which was a trial to you in my bodily condition you did not despise or loathe, but you received me as an angel of God, as Christ Jesus Himself. Where then is that sense of blessing you had? For I bear you witness, that if possible, you would have **plucked out your eyes** and given them to me."

2 Thessalonians 3:17: "I, Paul, write this greeting with my own hand, and this is a distinguishing mark in every letter; this is the way I write."

Galatians 6:11: "See with what large letters I am writing to you with my own hand."

Through Jesus we receive salvation. Through Paul we have received a large portion of the New Testament. Yet Jesus and Paul each received a "No" from God, in the sense that they did not get what they had prayed for. We are in good company then when we do not always get what we pray for. God may choose to help us through our trials and sufferings rather than taking them away from us. This also means that running away on our own may not be the answer. Rather let us turn to the Lord for wisdom, strength and direction.

Isaiah 40:31: "Yet those who wait for the LORD will gain new strength; they will mount up with wings like eagles, they will run and not get tired, they will walk and not become weary."

Proverbs 3:6: "In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths." (KJV)

Table of Contents pg 1, 2, 3, 4

James 1:5: "But if any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all men generously and without reproach, and it will be given to him."

Topic Index

WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO ASK IN HIS NAME?

John 14:13-15: "And whatever you ask in My name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If you ask Me anything in My name, I will do it. **If you love Me, you will keep My commandments."**

This does not mean that we will get whatever we ask for just because we end our prayer "in Jesus' name, amen". "In His name" includes in His person. Does your prayer line up with Jesus the person? Would He fully agree with your prayer? If not, the prayer is not really in Jesus' name. We might have intended for it to be in His name, but for this to be true the prayer must line up with Jesus' mind and interest. Following is the definition of the word "name" found in this passage:

Thayer's Definitions

"3686 onoma-
name: universally, used of proper names
the name is used for everything which the name covers, everything the thought or feeling of which is aroused in the mind by mentioning, hearing, remembering, the name, that is, for one's rank, authority, interests, pleasure, command, excellences, deeds etc." C6

So you can see that "in Jesus' name" means more than tacking the word "Jesus" on the end of a prayer. Following are some Scripture references that also show the meaning of Jesus' name:

Colossians 3:17: "And whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the **name** of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks through Him to God the Father."

Matthew 18:5: "And whoever receives one such child in My **name** receives Me."

Matthew 18:20: "For where two or three have gathered together in My **name**, there I am in their midst." (See also Matthew 19:29, Acts 2:21, Acts 2:38, and Romans 1:5.)

All of these references use the same Greek word for "name" that is defined above by *Thayer's*, and the clear implication is that using Jesus' name with sincerity includes all that is found there in the definition.

Table of Contents pg 1, 2, 3, 4
Topic Index

WHAT IS PRAYING "IN THE SPIRIT"?

Ephesians 6:18: "With all prayer and petition pray at all times in the Spirit, and with this in view, be on the alert with all perseverance and petition for all the saints."

The context Paul is using here talks about the Christian taking up the armor of God to stand against the forces of darkness. To pray "in the Spirit" is to pray in the *power of the Spirit*. It is much like praying in the name of Jesus. The prayer that the Holy Spirit inspires will indeed be answered.

The Holy Spirit plays an important part in our Christian lives. We are told the Holy Spirit will teach us (Luke 12:12, John 14:26). Then in Romans 8:26 we read, "*for we do not know how to pray as we should, but the Spirit Himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words*..." **The Holy Spirit actually intercedes for us because we do not know how to pray.** In Matthew 10:20 we are told that there is a time that the Holy Spirit can actually speak through us. *("For it is not you who speak, but it is the Spirit of your Father who speaks in you").* **When we are in tune with God our prayers can be inspired and empowered by the Holy Spirit**. This is a powerful prayer because it is lined up with God's will and it will be answered according to His will. We find a similar passage in Jude 1:19-20: *"These are the ones who cause divisions, worldly-minded, devoid of the Spirit. But you, beloved, building yourselves up on your most holy faith; praying in the Holy Spirit."*

Some people lean toward the understanding that praying "in the Spirit" is the same as speaking in tongues. This could be because the gift of tongues is from the Holy Spirit — but I do not believe that praying "in the Spirit" is limited to speaking in tongues; the context of Ephesians 6:18 and Jude 1:19-20 is not a discussion of the gifts of the Spirit. In both cases the context is exhorting the Christian to stand firm in his faith in the midst of opposition from the enemy. In this we need to be empowered in our prayers through the aid of the Holy Spirit.

Topic Index

The Bible shows us there is a connection between prayer and faith. To understand this connection I believe that it will be helpful to understand what faith is.

Webster's Collegiate Dictionary, 10th Edition

"faith n, pl faiths [ME feith, fr. OF feid, foi, fr. L fides; akin to L fidere to trust — more at bide] (13c) 1 a: **allegiance** to duty or a person: loyalty b (1): fidelity to one's promises. (2): sincerity of intentions 2 a (1): **belief and trust in and loyalty to God** (2): belief in the traditional doctrines of a religion b (1): firm belief in something for which there is no proof (2): **complete trust** 3: something that is believed esp. with strong conviction; esp: a system of religious beliefs syn see belief -- in faith : **without doubt or question**: verily faith vt (15c) archaic: believe, trust" A13
(See also Hebrews 11:1.)

Table of Contents pg 1, 2, 3, 4

For the Christian, faith includes allegiance, complete trust, and loyalty to God, without doubt or question. A Christian who wants a successful prayer life should pray with this understanding. Not only should the person believe in the existence of God, but all allegiance, trust, and loyalty should be in God also. As one who prays adopts this position, the prayers will line up with the will of God.

Psalm 37:4-5: "Delight yourself in the LORD; and He will give you the desires of your heart. Commit your way to the LORD, trust also in Him, and He will do it."

The first part of the above passage is often quoted, and largely misunderstood. Think about this a minute. If you truly delight yourself in the Lord, will not your desires be for God's will to be done? The desires of your heart would not be for worldly things, but rather for the things of the spirit. Whoever wishes to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God. (James 4:4). Notice that the second part of Psalm 37:4-5 requires commitment and trust in the Lord. The passage does not just say that God is going to fulfill the desires of your heart. As you delight, trust, and commit to Him, your desires will change to His desires — and then He will fulfill His purpose.

In the following two passages, we see that faith is an important aspect in our relationship with God. Keep in mind that by *Webster's* definition, Christian faith includes allegiance, complete trust, and loyalty to God, without doubt or question.

James 1:6-7: "But let him ask in faith without any doubting, for the one who doubts is like the surf of the sea driven and tossed by the wind. For let not that man expect that he will receive anything from the Lord..."

Hebrews 11:6: "And without faith it is impossible to please Him for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who seek Him."

Topic Index

Some people make the mistake of putting their faith in their own prayers. It is not by *our* power that the prayer is answered. Things do not come to pass simply because we have prayed something and believe that it will happen. God is the one who has the power to make all things happen. Our trust should be in this truth, not in a prayer itself. Keep in mind that if the motives of our hearts are wrong, believing something will make no difference (James 4:1-3).

Matthew 9:28-29: "And after He had come into the house, the blind men came up to Him, and Jesus said to them, 'Do you believe that I am able to do this?' They said to Him, 'Yes, Lord.' Then He touched their eyes, saying, 'Be it done to you according to your faith.'" (The faith here was placed in Jesus' ability to give them their sight.)

Table of Contents pg 1, 2, 3, 4

Romans 4:19-22: "And without becoming weak in faith he contemplated his own body, now as good as dead since he was about a hundred years old, and the deadness of Sarah's womb; yet, **with respect to the promise of God**, he did not waver in unbelief, but grew strong in faith, giving glory to God, and being fully assured that what He had promised, He was able also to perform. Therefore also it was reckoned to him as righteousness." (Abraham's faith was placed in God's ability to accomplish what he promised.)

For some related passages with emphasis on faith, you may also want to read Matthew 9:22, Mark 10:52, Mark 11:21-2, and Luke 7:48-50.

Topic Index

DOES THIS MEAN THAT GOD WILL NOT HELP THE BELIEVER IF THERE IS A LACK OF FAITH?

As I look at and admire the disciples, I am comforted to know that they also suffered the error of lack of faith — just as we all sometimes do.

Matthew 14:28-32: "And Peter answered Him and said, 'Lord, if it is You, command me to come to You on the water.' And He said, 'Come!' And Peter got out of the boat, and walked on the water and came toward Jesus. But seeing the wind, he became afraid, and beginning to sink, he cried out, saying, 'Lord, save me!' And immediately Jesus stretched out His hand and took hold of him, and said to him, 'O you of little faith, why did you doubt?' And when they got into the boat, the wind stopped." (Peter walked on water for a short distance and then faltered in his faith and began to sink. Jesus gave Peter a mild rebuke for not having enough faith.)

Mark 4:37-40: "And there arose a fierce gale of wind, and the waves were breaking over the boat so much that the boat was already filling up. And He Himself was in the stern, asleep on the cushion; and they awoke Him and said to Him, 'Teacher, do You not care that we are perishing?'And being aroused, He rebuked the wind and said to the sea, 'Hush, be still.' And the wind died down and it became perfectly calm. And He said to them, 'Why are you so timid? How is it that you have no faith?'"

In this example, Jesus asked His disciples why they had no faith. Jesus indicates they should not have been afraid. Why? Because they should have trusted Him through the storm. How often do we find ourselves in a storm and suffer from lack of faith? Our focus should be on the Lord, and not the storm. I admit that this is easier said than done at times, but it is still the position that we must take.

Table of Contents pg 1, 2, 3, 4

In Acts 12:1-17, we read that Herod had Peter thrown in prison. In verse 5 we see that *"Peter was kept in the prison, but prayer for him was being made fervently by the church to God*." Then we are told of how an angel went and took Peter out of the prison. In verse 12, we read that Peter *"went to the house of Mary, the mother of John who was also called Mark, where many were gathered together and were praying. And when he knocked at the door of the gate, a servant-girl named Rhoda came to answer. And when she recognized Peter's voice, because of her joy she did not open the gate, but ran in and announced that Peter was standing in front of the gate. And they said to her, 'You are out of your mind!' But she kept insisting that it was so. And they kept saying, 'It is his angel.' But Peter continued knocking; and when they had opened the door they saw him and were amazed. "*

What is amazing about this passage is that the church was praying fervently on Peter's behalf, but when Peter was rescued they did not believe it and they were amazed. They were apparently praying according to God's will because He sent an angel to rescue Peter. Yet even though they were praying fervently they showed a lack of faith when they did not believe it was Peter at the door. In Scripture we see that faith pleases and moves God to respond. Yet at the same time a lack of faith does not necessarily mean that He will not answer our prayers.

Topic Index

BEWARE OF WHAT IS IN CONTRATICTION TO THE WORD OF THE LORD

A woman was praying to know what church to join. When she had finished praying the Jehovah Witnesses knocked at her door. The woman mistook this as an answer to her prayer and joined the Jehovah Witnesses. Since that time she has had the truth explained to her in some detail, but she still clings to that moment as an answered prayer. Is God at fault? No! — not at all. She has heard the truth, but rejected it on the basis of feelings, not Scripture.

In a similar case Joseph Smith, the founder of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints (Mormons), tells us that he went into a grove to pray, to know which church to join. He relates a heavenly vision in which he was told to join none of them, because they were all wrong. Since then, we are told, the true church was restored through him. Yet Mormons do not teach of the same God, Jesus or Gospel as is find in the Bible.

In both of these incidences someone prayed to know the true church. Both of these religions are opposed to each other, as well as historic Christianity and the teachings of the Bible. We are also warned not to make these errors in the Bible. In 1 Kings Chapter 13 we find an example of someone listening to another person and ignoring what the Lord had previously told him. This error led to his death!

1 Kings 13:18: "And he said to him, 'I also am a prophet like you, and an angel spoke to me by the word of the LORD, saying, 'Bring him back with you to your house, that he may eat bread and drink water.' But he lied to him.'"

Table of Contents pg 1, 2, 3, 4

In the context here the man of God declares *"For so it was commanded me by the word of the LORD, saying, 'You shall eat no bread, nor drink water, nor return by the way which you came."* Yet he listened to this man who lied to him declaring himself also to be a prophet. Due to his disobedience to the Lord after listening to the liar the man of God was killed by a lion.

Following are some warnings for us that we should not fall into the same trap:

Proverbs 16:25: "There is a way which seems right to a man, but its end is the way of death."

Matthew 24:24: "For false Christs and false prophets will arise and will show great signs and wonders, so as to mislead, if possible, even the elect."

Galatians 1:8: "But even though we, or an angel from heaven, should preach to you a gospel contrary to that which we have preached to you, let him be accursed."

1 John 4:1: "Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God; because many false prophets have gone out into the world."

Peter 2:1-3: "But false prophets also arose among the people, just as there will also be false teachers among you, who will secretly introduce destructive heresies, even denying the Master who bought them, bringing swift destruction upon themselves. And many will follow their sensuality, and because of them the way of the truth will be maligned; and in their greed they will exploit you with false words; their judgment from long ago is not idle, and their destruction is not asleep."

Corinthians 11:3: "But I am afraid, lest as the serpent deceived Eve by his craftiness, your minds should be led astray from the simplicity and purity of devotion to Christ."

2 Corinthians 11:13-15: "For such men are false apostles, deceitful workers, disguising themselves as apostles of Christ. And no wonder, for even Satan disguises himself as an angel of light. Therefore it is not surprising if his servants also disguise themselves as servants of righteousness; whose end shall be according to their deeds."

If these warnings tell us anything, it is that we should not believe things that contradict what we find in God's written word the Bible.

Proverbs 3:6: "In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths." (KJV)

Table of Contents pg 1, 2, 3, 4
Topic Index

PERSISTENCY IN PRAYER

God does not always give us what we ask the first time we ask for it. Whether it is a matter of timing, or persistence so as to stretch our faith, the results are the same. There are times that what we ask for may seem as though it lines up with the word of God. We search our motives and we cannot find fault yet it seems as though there is no response at all. Well, then — keep praying!

Luke 18:1-8

"Now He was telling them a parable to show that at all times they ought to pray and not to lose heart,
saying, 'There was in a certain city a judge who did not fear God, and did not respect man.
And there was a widow in that city, and she kept coming to him, saying, 'Give me legal protection from my opponent.'
And for a while he was unwilling; but afterward he said to himself, 'Even though I do not fear God nor respect man,
yet because this widow bothers me, I will give her legal protection, lest by continually coming she wear me out.'"
And the Lord said, 'Hear what the unrighteous judge said;
now shall not God bring about justice for His elect, who cry to Him day and night, and will He delay long over them?
I tell you that He will bring about justice for them speedily. However, when the Son of Man comes, will He find faith on the earth?'"

Luke 11:5-8

"And He said to them, 'Suppose one of you shall have a friend, and shall go to him at midnight, and say to him, 'Friend, lend me three loaves;
for a friend of mine has come to me from a journey, and I have nothing to set before him';
and from inside he shall answer and say, 'Do not bother me; the door has already been shut and my children and I are in bed; I cannot get up and give you anything.'
I tell you, even though he will not get up and give him anything because he is his friend, yet because of his persistence he will get up and give him as much as he needs.'"

Ephesians 6:18

"With all prayer and petition pray at all times in the Spirit, and with this in view, be on the alert with all perseverance and petition for all the saints..." ("Perseverance" means "persistency".)

Table of Contents pg 1, 2, 3, 4

Matthew 15:21-28

"And Jesus went away from there, and withdrew into the district of Tyre and Sidon.
And behold, a Canaanite woman came out from that region, and began to cry out, saying, 'Have mercy on me, O Lord, Son of David; my daughter is cruelly demon-possessed.'
But He did not answer her a word. And His disciples came to Him and kept asking Him, saying, 'Send her away, for she is shouting out after us.'
But He answered and said, 'I was sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.'
But she came and began to bow down before Him, saying, 'Lord, help me!'
And He answered and said, 'It is not good to take the children's bread and throw it to the dogs.'
But she said, 'Yes, Lord; but even the dogs feed on the crumbs which fall from their masters' table.'
Then Jesus answered and said to her, 'O woman, your faith is great; be it done for you as you wish.' And her daughter was healed at once."

In this last passage, it seems as though Jesus first ignored the woman; then, as she persisted in her request, it would appear she was rebuked for her request. Still she did not stop. Finally Jesus said she had great faith and her request was granted. Suppose she had just given up after being ignored or rebuked?

If after we search the Scriptures we can find no fault with our prayer or our motives, then perhaps we should just keep asking until God does answer, or makes it clear that He wants us to stop asking, or shows us what is wrong with the prayer. For something is clearly wrong — motive, prayer timing, or something else. Keep asking until you know for certain which it is. I prayed for my Dad's salvation for ten years before it happened and my dad was saved.

God has answered my prayers at times in such subtle ways that I only recognized the answer by reflecting back and pondering over it. At other times, God has answered my prayers so clearly that even though I did not hear His audible voice, there was no doubt in my mind what He said. I believe the key is to pray continually with an open heart and respond to the Lord when He speaks to you. We may not always know how He directs our paths, but if we simply trust Him, we will never regret it. As in any relationship, if you want your relationship with God to grow, keep the lines of communication open. God speaks to us in His written word and in our hearts when we communicate to Him by prayer. Our spiritual growth depends upon our willingness to apply what he shows in our studies and prayers.

Remember, "7 days without prayer makes one weak"!

Topic Index

Table of Contents pg 1, 2, 3, 4

The Bible talks about the will of God. That is that God has desires or plans that he would like for us to willingly cooperate with. The confusing thing for the Christian is that He does not give us all of the specifics about His plans. So how do we cooperate? The Bible does give us clues about being in the will of God.

You can click on "The Will of God" to start reading at the beginning of this topic or use the page index to jump to the part that interest you most.

Overview of content in this section is as follows:

The Will of God (pg. 216)

Overview of content in this section is as follows:

What does it mean to be in the will of God? (pg. 216)

How has God led people in the past? (pg. 216)

How does one determine and follow the will of God? **(pg. 217)**

God uses his written word to direct us. **(pg. 219)**

God can use the counsel of others to direct us. (pg. 220)

God can direct us through circumstances. (pg. 221)

God can direct us by closing doors. (pg. 222)

Can one always know the will of God in a particular situation? (pg. 222)

If I follow the will of God will my life be easy? (pg. 223)

What is the incentive for following Gods' will? (pg. 224)

Prayer plays a part in the will of God (pg. 225)

The will of God is for us is for us to turn to Jesus **(pg. 225)**

Table of Contents pg 1, 2, 3, 4
Topic Index

THE WILL OF GOD

WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE IN THE WILL OF GOD?

To be in God's will means that you are carrying out what God's purpose is for you. You are fulfilling God's desires and wishes for your life. God really does have a purpose for each and every one of us. As our Father he also has our best interest at heart.

The majority of God's will for your life has to do with your relationship with Him. Where you live, work, go to school, are all secondary issues. God cares about your character more than where you live work or go to school. God does indeed care about all of the little details in your life; yet it seems to be these secondary issues that most often lead to confusion about what God's will is for our lives.

It is in these secondary issues that the will of God is often spoken of as some kind of mystery. Although it may be true that we may not know what the Lord would have us do in every situation, which has little to do with being in the will of God. Being in the will of God is not solely dependent upon our understanding of it. The simplest way that I can think of to answer the question, ("How do I find the will of God?") is to answer, "By walking in it!"

When I am hiking a path out in the woods I cannot see the end of the path from where I start. I have to follow the path. If I leave the path and venture out into the bushes, I may not see the path at all — but it is still there. Sometimes I may come across fallen trees, landslides, snow, or other obstacles that obstruct the view of the path. At times, obstacles have obscured my sight of the path. I have found that, if I keep going in the same direction and look for it; I can find the path again. Sometimes the path is steep, and hard; often, that is when it is most rewarding to stay focused on the path. Following the will of God for your life is very similar. The farther off the path you go, the harder it will be to get back on track. You may even have to look at a map, or ask someone for directions by reading your Bible or seeking Godly counsel.

Topic Index

HOW HAS GOD LED PEOPLE IN THE PAST?

God has led people in a number of different ways in the past. In Exodus, God led Moses and his people in the desert with a cloud and a pillar of fire. God has led people in the Old Testament through prophets and signs. God also has led people using angels, dreams, and visions. God has spoken to people directly and through others. God is not limited to one set pattern in the leading of His people. We are to always seek God for His guidance.

Table of Contents pg 1, 2, 3, 4

WE CAN SEE IN SCRIPTURE THAT MAKING PLANS AND DECISIONS WITHOUT CONSULTING THE LORD IS NOT WISE.

Isaiah 30:1-2: " 'Woe to the rebellious children,' declares the LORD, 'Who execute a plan, but not Mine, and make an alliance, but not of My Spirit, in order to add sin to sin; Who proceed down to Egypt, without consulting me, to take refuge in the safety of Pharaoh, and to seek shelter in the shadow of Egypt!'"

Proverbs 14:12: "There is a way which seems right to a man, but its end is the way of death."

Topic Index

HOW DOES ONE DETERMINE AND FOLLOW THE WILL OF GOD?

The will of God is in His written word. I remember a friend once told me that the answer to everything was in the Bible. I objected and said that the Bible did not tell me what color of socks to wear each day. My friend Mark laughed, and insisted that it does! He then gave a partial quote of Matthew 6:25: "Do not worry about what you will wear! Is not life more than food or clothing?"

In God's written word there are a lot of things that we are told to do as well as things we are told not to do. However, God is not a cosmic killjoy who has set out to make your life miserable (Matthew 7:11). In fact, Jesus said that He came that we might have life and have it more abundantly (John 10:10). Everything that God tells us to do, or not to do, is really for our own benefit — not His. As already stated, God is first concerned about our relationship with Him. Where we live, work, or go to school, comes after this.

Matthew 6:33: "But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added to you." (The context here applies to food and clothing.)

Psalm 37:4: "Delight yourself in the LORD; and He will give you the desires of your heart. (The interesting thing about this passage is, if you really delight yourself in the Lord, the desires of your heart will be on godly things.)

Did you notice that these verses told us to put God first, and then "these things would follow"? There are a lot of "dos and don'ts" in the Bible. For those who fret over the letter of the law and become overwhelmed, Jesus made it simple when He said all of the Old Testament law hinged on two things.

Matthew 22:37-40: "And He said to him, 'You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind.' This is the great and foremost commandment. The second is like it, 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' On these two commandments depend the whole Law and the Prophets."

To be in God's will we must be in a good relationship with Him. The thing that ruins our relationship with God is sin. To restore our relationship with God we need to continually admit our faults and turn away from them. We must confess our sins and repent.

1 John1:8-9: “If we say that we have no sin, we are deceiving ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.”

Proverbs 28:13: “He who conceals his transgressions will not prosper, but he who confesses and forsakes them will find compassion.”

So far we have seen that to be in the will of God we must first develop our relationship with Him. This involves confessing our sins and turning away from them. Next we will need Biblical convictions. There are numerous examples in the Bible of people who had predetermined to follow God no matter what. Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego refused to obey the King’s orders to worship the golden image that he had set up. They did this even at the risk of being burned to death (Daniel 3:17-18). Joshua also had predetermined that "as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD" (Joshua 24:15). Ruth is also a good example of someone who was blessed because she had predetermined to stay with Naomi and serve God and not return to her people and their false gods (Ruth 2:15-16). Peter and the apostles said they must obey God rather than men (Acts 5:29). We also must predetermine that in any given situation we will follow God and not the crowd, or so-called wisdom of man.

We can apply this knowledge in many different ways. Let's say, for example, that a young beautiful woman is looking for a job. In the “Help Wanted” ads she sees two different job listings. One job pays five times as much as the other. Should the dollar amount be the determining factor? The lesser-paying job is as a waitress. The higher-paying job is as a stripper in a nightclub. For the woman with Biblical convictions, the decision is easy. She may consider what Jesus said — “men commit adultery simply by looking upon a woman with lust in their hearts” — and want no part of it. Biblical descriptions of a Godly woman would also help show her that the higher-paying job was not in God's will for her. Imagine that there is a third job listed, working as a business consultant, and the lady does have a degree in business. However, the job will require her to move. Does that mean that it is God's will for her to move? Not necessarily. How will this affect the rest of her life? Is there a good church in the new location? How will moving effect other relationships? All these questions are things to prayerfully consider before reacting. The woman following God knows that the salary offered by any job should not the determining factor of whether or not that job is accepted.

Table of Contents pg 1, 2, 3, 4

In out next example, we have a young Christian man who is lonely and would like to marry. He meets two ladies who show some interest in him. One is wealthy, and prettier than the other, but she wants nothing to do with going to church with him and shows no interest in God. The other woman, although not as pretty or as wealthy as the other, talks about the Lord regularly and consults the Lord in all of her decisions. Now, just because one woman loves the Lord does not automatically mean that it is God's will for our young man to marry her. The wealthy, prettier woman would be the choice many in the world would pick. However the young man following God automatically rules her out as a choice because the Bible tells us not to be bound together to unbelievers (2 Corinthians 6:14).

We should consider the counsel of God in His written word wherever we can find application. Determining to do this beforehand can save us from many pitfalls and miseries. This does not mean that we should be paralyzed and not do anything unless God directly tells us to. Rather we move ahead and filter everything through what we do know of God's will, and trust Him to lead us. In the case of looking for a job, we don't just pray for a job, but we also go out and look for one. While looking for the job we ask God to lead us, remembering that it is easier to direct us, if we are actually moving. Similarly it is hard to steer a parked car.

Topic Index

READ THE FOLLOWING PASSAGES AND ASK YOURSELF, "DOES GOD DIRECT OUR STEPS THROUGH HIS WRITTEN WORD?"

Psalm 1:1-3: "How blessed is the man who does not walk in the counsel of the wicked, nor stand in the path of sinners, nor sit in the seat of scoffers! But his delight is in the law of the LORD, and in His law he meditates day and night. And he will be like a tree firmly planted by streams of water, which yields its fruit in its season, and its leaf does not wither; and in whatever he does, he prospers."

Psalm 32:8: "I will instruct you and teach you in the way which you should go; I will counsel you with My eye upon you."

Psalm 73:24: "**With Thy counsel Thou wilt guide me**, and afterward receive me to glory."

Psalm 111:10: "The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom; a good understanding have all those who do His commandments His praise endures forever."

Psalm 119:9-11: "How can a young man keep his way pure? By keeping it according to Thy word. With all my heart I have sought Thee; do not let me wander from Thy commandments. Thy word I have treasured in my heart, that I may not sin against Thee."

Table of Contents pg 1, 2, 3, 4

Psalm 119:101-105: "I have restrained my feet from every evil way, that I may keep Thy word. I have not turned aside from Thine ordinances, for Thou thyself hast taught me. How sweet are Thy words to my taste! Yes, sweeter than honey to my mouth! From Thy precepts I get understanding; therefore I hate every false way. Thy word is a lamp to my feet, and a light to my path."

Proverbs 1:7: "The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge; fools despise wisdom and instruction."

Proverbs 2:1-7: "My son, if you will receive my sayings, and treasure my commandments within you, Make your ear attentive to wisdom, incline your heart to understanding; For if you cry for discernment, lift your voice for understanding; If you seek her as silver, and search for her as for hidden treasures; Then you will discern the fear of the LORD, and discover the knowledge of God. For the LORD gives wisdom; from His mouth come knowledge and understanding. He stores up sound wisdom for the upright; He is a shield to those who walk in integrity."

Proverbs 4:11-14: "I have directed you in the way of wisdom; I have led you in upright paths. When you walk, your steps will not be impeded; and if you run, you will not stumble. Take hold of instruction; do not let go. Guard her, for she is your life. Do not enter the path of the wicked, and do not proceed in the way of evil men."

Isaiah 48:17-18: "Thus says the LORD, your Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel; 'I am the LORD your God, who teaches you to profit, who leads you in the way you should go.
If only you had paid attention to My commandments! Then your well-being would have been like a river, and your righteousness like the waves of the sea.'"

Jesus said both of the following statements: "My food is to do the will of Him who sent Me (John 4:34); and "It is written, 'Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God'" (Matthew 4:4, quote from Deuteronomy 8:3).

Topic Index

GOD CAN USE THE COUNSEL OF OTHERS TO DIRECT US
Proverbs 15:22: "Without consultation, plans are frustrated, but with many counselors they succeed."

Proverbs 1:5" "A wise man will hear and increase in learning, and a man of understanding will acquire **wise** counsel."

Table of Contents pg 1, 2, 3, 4
Topic Index

GOD ALSO DIRECTS US THROUGH CIRCUMSTANCE

For example the Messiah was to be born in Bethlehem, according to Old Testament prophecy (Micah 5:2). However, the reason Joseph took his pregnant wife Mary to Bethlehem was because of a decree issued by Caesar Augustus that required everyone to return to their own city for a census (Luke 2:1-8). Joseph did not go to Bethlehem to be in God's will and fulfill prophecy. Joseph went to Bethlehem because he was required to for the census. Joseph was in the will of God without knowing it.

I once drove from Oregon down to Yreka, California, to pick up my nephew. When I got there and knocked on the door, nobody answered. Since I had already driven that far I decided to drive a little farther, to hike around at Castle Crag State Park, and then come back to see if my nephew was home yet. I started up a trail that crosses the Pacific Crest Trail, which runs from Mexico to Canada. As I was approaching that intersection I heard a little girl screaming and crying. I started running toward the sound to see what was the matter. It turned out she was lost and terribly frightened. I spent some time talking with her and praying with her concerning the whereabouts of the adults she was supposed to be with. I then took her back down the trail to a parking lot, where she recognized the car she came in. So I left a note on the windshield telling them they could find her at the ranger station. I then drove her to the ranger station and informed them that the adults could also possibly be lost out there. Later when I drove back to Yreka, I found out my nephew had been home the entire time. He had been asleep, and did not hear me knock on the door.

I am convinced that God had more in mind for me to do that day than to pick up my nephew or go hiking. The Lord led me to help a lost little girl. He led me there through circumstances. Call it a coincidence if you want to. I have found that the more I follow the Lord, the more "coincidences" I have, especially after prayer

Following is some Scripture that supports the idea that God directs our paths. Notice that these passages do not imply His leading only by His written word.
Psalm 37:23-24: "The steps of a man are established by the LORD; and He delights in his way. When he falls, he shall not be hurled headlong; because the LORD is the One who holds his hand."

Proverbs 3:5-6: "Trust in the LORD with all your heart, and lean not on your own understanding; In all your ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct your paths."(NKJ)

Proverbs 16:3: "Commit your works to the LORD, and your plans will be established."

Proverbs 16:9: "The mind of man plans his way, but the LORD directs his steps."

Table of Contents pg 1, 2, 3, 4
Topic Index

The next couple of verses are examples of how God closed doors to redirect Paul.
Acts 16:7: "...and when they had come to Mysia, they were trying to go into Bithynia, and the Spirit of Jesus did not permit them."

Romans 1:13: "And I do not want you to be unaware, brethren, that often I have planned to come to you and have been prevented thus far..."

Topic Index

CAN ONE ALWAYS KNOW WHAT GOD'S WILL IS IN A PARTICULAR SITUATION?

As we can see in the following passages, the apostle Paul, James, and the writer of Hebrews, did not always know what God's will was in every situation.

Acts 18:21: "but taking leave of them and saying, 'I will return to you again if God wills,' he set sail from Ephesus."

1 Corinthians 4:19: "But I will come to you soon, if the Lord wills, and I shall find out, not the words of those who are arrogant, but their power."

1 Corinthians 16:7: "For I do not wish to see you now just in passing; for I hope to remain with you for some time, if the Lord permits."

Hebrews 6:3: "And this we shall do, if God permits."

James 4:12-17: "There is only one Lawgiver and Judge, the One who is able to save and to destroy; but who are you who judge your neighbor? Come now, you who say, 'Today or tomorrow, we shall go to such and such a city, and spend a year there and engage in business and make a profit.' Yet you do not know what your life will be like tomorrow. You are just a vapor that appears for a little while and then vanishes away. Instead, you ought to say, 'If the Lord wills, we shall live and also do this or that.' But as it is, you boast in your arrogance; all such boasting is evil. Therefore, to one who knows the right thing to do, and does not do it, to him it is sin.

Table of Contents pg 1, 2, 3, 4
Topic Index

IF I FOLLOW THE WILL OF GOD, WILL MY LIFE BE EASY?

It is most difficult to understand the will of God in the midst of a hardship or tragedy. Often there does not seem to be any answer that is comforting to the hurt deep down in our souls. Why does God allow some things to happen? There is no answer to that question that I know of that will make all of the hurt instantly go away. I can only tell you that we see a very narrow slice of the picture, whereas God sees everything — past, present, and future. We are not alone in this struggle of understanding. Many people in the Bible also struggled with this.

Perhaps the deepest anguish or hurting feeling recorded in this area is what Jesus experienced from the cross. What Jesus experienced when He cried out, "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" (Matthew 27:46) is far beyond what we can comprehend. We know that Jesus was made sin for us, and in this process He was accursed of God (2 Corinthians 5:21 and Galatians 3:13). We also know that Jesus committed His spirit unto the Father moments after this (Luke 23:46). Still, the anguish that Jesus must have experienced, to feel rejected by the Father while being tortured, is beyond our imagination. Yet even then Jesus was in the will of the Father. Consider what Jesus prayed before He went to the cross.

Matthew 26:39: "And He went a little beyond them, and fell on His face and prayed, saying, 'My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me; yet not as I will, but as Thou wilt.'"

As we can see by what happened to Jesus while He was in the will of God, being in God's will does not mean that our lives will be easy. Jesus was crucified. All of the Apostles died martyrs for their faith, with the exception of John, who was exiled to the island of Patmos. The Apostle Paul had many hardships during his missionary journeys, as we can see in the following passage.

2 Corinthians 11:23-28: "Are they servants of Christ? (I speak as if insane) I more so; in far more labors, in far more imprisonments, beaten times without number, often in danger of death. Five times I received from the Jews thirty-nine lashes. Three times I was beaten with rods, once I was stoned, three times I was shipwrecked, a night and a day I have spent in the deep. I have been on frequent journeys, in dangers from rivers, dangers from robbers, dangers from my countrymen, dangers from the Gentiles, dangers in the city, dangers in the wilderness, dangers on the sea, dangers among false brethren; I have been in labor and hardship, through many sleepless nights, in hunger and thirst, often without food, in cold and exposure. Apart from such external things, there is the daily pressure upon me of concern for all the churches."

In some cases we will be blessed because of our hardships.

Luke 6:22-23: "Blessed are you when men hate you, and ostracize you, and cast insults at you, and spurn your name as evil, for the sake of the Son of Man. Be glad in that day, and leap for joy, for behold, your reward is great in heaven; for in the same way their fathers used to treat the prophets."

James 1:12: "Blessed is a man who perseveres under trial; for once he has been approved, he will receive the crown of life, which the Lord has promised to those who love Him."

Table of Contents pg 1, 2, 3, 4

James 1:2-4: “Consider it all joy, my brethren, when you encounter various trials, knowing that the testing of your faith produces endurance. And let endurance have its perfect result, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing.”

This last verse lets us see a purpose in our trials. Notice that it says, "When you encounter various trials". It did not say "IF" you encounter trials, but "when".

Topic Index

WHAT IS THE INCENTIVE FOR FOLLOWING GOD’S WILL?

There are many incentives, which could be a study in itself, but here are a couple of examples of abundant life here and rewards in heaven.

John 10:10: "The thief comes only to steal, and kill, and destroy; I came that they might have life, and might have it abundantly.”

1 Corinthians 3:8: “Now he who plants and he who waters are one; but each will receive his own reward according to his own labor.”

Hebrews 10:30-36:
“30 For we know Him who said, ‘Vengeance is Mine, I will repay.’ And again, ‘The Lord will judge His people.’
31 It is a terrifying thing to fall into the hands of the living God.
32 But remember the former days, when, after being enlightened, you endured a great conflict of sufferings,
33 partly, by being made a public spectacle through reproaches and tribulations, and partly by becoming sharers with those who were so treated.
34 For you showed sympathy to the prisoners, and accepted joyfully the seizure of your property, knowing that you have for yourselves a better possession and an abiding one.
35 Therefore, do not throw away your confidence, which has a great reward.
36 For you have need of endurance, so that when you have done the will of God, you may receive what was promised.”

Matthew 6:19-20: "Do not lay up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal.”But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys, and where thieves do not break in or steal...”

Table of Contents pg 1, 2, 3, 4
Topic Index

PRAYER PLAYS A PART IN THE WILL OF GOD

Matthew 7:7-11: "Ask, and it shall be given to you; seek, and you shall find; knock, and it shall be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it shall be opened. Or what man is there among you, when his son shall ask him for a loaf, will give him a stone? Or if he shall ask for a fish, he will not give him a snake, will he? If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more shall your Father who is in heaven give what is good to those who ask Him!"

John 15:7: "If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it shall be done for you."

James 1:5: "But if any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all men generously and without reproach, and it will be given to him."

James 5:16: "Therefore, confess your sins to one another, and pray for one another, so that you may be healed. The effective prayer of a righteous man can accomplish much."

I John 5:14-15: "And this is the confidence which we have before Him, that, if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us. And if we know that He hears us in whatever we ask, we know that we have the requests which we have asked from Him."

You are not big enough to ruin God's will beyond repair. Learn from your mistakes and go on.

Romans 8:28: "And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose."

Topic Index

THE WILL OF GOD IS FOR US TO TURN TO JESUS

For those who do not know the Lord yet this is the place to start.

John 6:38-40:
38 " 'For I have come down from heaven, not to do My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me.
39 And this is the will of Him who sent Me, that of all that He has given Me I lose nothing, but raise it up on the last day.
40 For this is the will of My Father, that everyone who beholds the Son and believes in Him, may have eternal life; and I Myself will raise him up on the last day.'"

Table of Contents pg 1, 2, 3, 4

JESUS WAS ALWAYS WITHIN THE WILL OF THE FATHER

John 8:29 "'And He who sent Me is with Me; He has not left Me alone, for I always do the things that are pleasing to Him.'"

John 5:30: "'I can do nothing on My own initiative. As I hear, I judge; and My judgment is just, because I do not seek My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me.'"

CONCLUSION

The Bible does not give us a set pattern by which we can make all decisions. God can lead us in a variety of different ways — including Scripture, advice from Godly and knowledgeable people, through circumstances, and, less often, through dreams or visions.

The best way to be sure to be in the will of God is to seek Him in everything. Pray and study His word and do your best to obey and please Him in all aspects of your life. God can and does direct us without our complete understanding of exactly what He wants us to do for every situation. Our main part is obedience to that which we do know, and seeking Him in everything.

I know not what the future holds, but I know who holds the future.

Topic Index

Table of Contents pg 1, 2, 3, 4

Does God exist? Or is this just some blind faith held by Christians? What sort of evidence can a person offer to show that he is real? Is science and God compatible? Well this section is to answer some of those questions.

You can click on "Does God exist?" to start reading at the beginning of this topic or use the page index to jump to the part that interest you most.

Overview of content in this section is as follows:

DOES GOD EXIST? (pg. 228)

I know that God exists because:

I know Him. (pg. 229)

The world is here and is full of an intentional design; in everything from planets to flowers and atoms. The design is evidence there was a designer and a maker. (pg. 229)

Evidence from the worldwide flood is indication that God not only exists, but He once judged the world already. (pg. 230)

God has continued to communicate with mankind, sharing with us details about the future that no mere man could possibly know (prophecy). (pg. 230)

He has shared science that has been proven accurate, long before that science was "discovered" by man. (pg. 231)

God was here in human form 2,000 years ago. There are historical records of this fact. His testimony is credible because His death and resurrection were foretold before He was born. He Himself also predicted His resurrection, and there were more than 500 eyewitnesses who saw Jesus during a period of forty days after His resurrection. Jesus even appeared to unbelievers. The resurrection of Jesus is historical fact that can stand in a court of law. The Bible says Jesus is God. (pg. 232)

There are numerous accounts of people who have been clinically dead who have later revived to give accounts of God, Heaven, and Hell. (pg. 232)

Great scientific minds of both the past and the present have continually believed in the existence of God. (pg. 233)

Table of Contents pg 1, 2, 3, 4

DOES GOD EXIST?

Sharing with the non-believer does not always start with sharing from the Bible. Some people claim that they do not even believe that God exists. Chapter 1 of Romans tells us that such denial of God's existence is due to a hardness of heart. Still, one should be prepared to offer some reason to the non-believer for a belief in God.

I know that God exists because:

I know Him.

The world is here and is full of an intentional design; in everything from planets to flowers and atoms. The design is evidence there was a designer and a maker.

Evidence from the worldwide flood is indication that God not only exists, but He once judged the world already.

God has continued to communicate with mankind, sharing with us details about the future that no mere man could possibly know (prophecy).

He has shared science that has been proven accurate, long before that science was "discovered" by man.

God was here in human form 2,000 years ago. There are historical records of this fact. His testimony is credible because His death and resurrection were foretold before He was born. He Himself also predicted His resurrection, and there were more than 500 eyewitnesses who saw Jesus during a period of forty days after His resurrection. Jesus even appeared to unbelievers. The resurrection of Jesus is historical fact that can stand in a court of law. The Bible says Jesus is God

There are numerous accounts of people who have been clinically dead who have later revived to give accounts of God, Heaven, and Hell.

Great scientific minds of both the past and the present have continually believed in the existence of God.

The following discourse will help you devise your own testimony, and help you be prepared when you find opportunities to share.

Table of Contents pg 1, 2, 3, 4
Topic Index

How do I know God exists?

I know that god exist because:
I know Him.

Give an example of an answered prayer, or share your own testimony of salvation. Nobody can effectively argue against personal experience.

Topic Index

I know that god exist because:
The world is here and is full of an intentional design; in everything from planets to flowers and atoms. The design is evidence there was a designer and a maker.

I am here and you are here. Mankind originated somewhere — there was a beginning. There are two main schools of thought regarding man's origin: Creationism and Evolution. Creation says "in the beginning, God", while evolution claims that "in the beginning, Matter." Evolutionists teach that single cells eventually evolved into a person. The frog magically turning into a prince is a fairy tale that is not based upon knowable science. There is more than one type of evolution taught. Micro evolution is true and we can see examples of it. A dog can be bred into other types of dogs, but the resulting breed will always remain; it will always remain within the same kind, it will never become an elephant! For the dog to become an elephant is "macro evolution", which has NEVER been seen or proven. To believe in macro evolution requires a giant leap of faith with no direct evidence at all.

The second law of thermodynamics tells us that everything is reaching a state of disorder. Things die, rot, and decay. We see evidence of this everywhere; even your house will eventually fall apart without maintenance from an outside source. Evolution teaches the opposite, that things over time can reach a state of order and design. This has NEVER been observed or proven. A tadpole may turn into a frog, but for a frog to turn into a prince is a fairy tale, not science. Even Charles Darwin knew this was absurd.

Darwin said: "To suppose that the eye, (with so many parts all working together) could have been formed by natural selection, seems, I freely confess, absurd to the highest degree." [A11]

That is Darwin's own opinion of using natural selection to explain the origin of traits that depend on "many parts all working together."

Christians believe that design shows evidence of a maker. If I found a watch, I would probably reach the logical conclusion that somebody made that watch, because it has a design and many intricate working parts. The Bible tells us that both creation and the flood are knowable to mankind.

Table of Contents pg 1, 2, 3, 4

2 Peter 3:5-6: "For when they maintain this, it escapes their notice that by the word of God the heavens existed long ago and the earth was formed out of water and by water, through which the world at that time was destroyed, being flooded with water." (NAS)

Rom 1:20-22: "20) For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes, His eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly seen, being understood through what has been made, so that they are without excuse. 21) For even though they knew God, they did not honor Him as God, or give thanks; but they became futile in their speculations, and their foolish heart was darkened. 22) Professing to be wise, they became fools." (NAS)

Topic Index

I know that god exist because:

Evidence from the worldwide flood is indication that God not only exists, but He once judged the world already.

God judged the world back in the days of Noah with a worldwide flood. The fact that He did this and there is evidence of this flood verifies that God exists. We know there was a worldwide flood, because clams were found on top of Mt. Everest, and fossilized oysters were found high in the Andes mountain range in Peru. These locations are on different continents high above the ocean. How did the clams and oysters get there? They got there because of a flood produced due to God's judgment on the world.
(Mt Everest: Holt Modern Earth Science, 1983; Giant Oysters: Dailey American Republic, Friday, March 2, 2001 [J]).

Topic Index

I know that god exist because:

God has continued to communicate with mankind, sharing with us details about the future that no mere man could possibly know (prophecy).

Much of this communication between God and man has been recorded in written form. In the past, God shared with people knowledge of future events that nobody could accurately predict. We call these "fulfilled prophecies". The Bible has NEVER been proven wrong. Consider this from ***Time Magazine (Dec. 30, 1974):*** *"After more than two centuries of facing the heaviest scientific guns that could be brought to bear, the bible has survived and perhaps better for the siege even on the critics' own terms. Historical fact, the scriptures seem more acceptable now than they did when the rationalist began the attack"* [B1]

Table of Contents pg 1, 2, 3, 4

Here is one example of Bible prophecy that has been proven true:

> *Isaiah 44:28-45: "It is I who says of Cyrus, 'He is My shepherd! And he will perform all My desire.' And he declares of Jerusalem, 'She will be built,' and of the temple, 'Your foundation will be laid.' Thus says the LORD to Cyrus His anointed, whom I have taken by the right hand, to subdue nations before him, and to loose the loins of kings; to open doors before him so that gates will not be shut."*

Cyrus is mentioned by name, although at this point he has not yet been born. Another interesting fact about this prophetic message — when Isaiah wrote this, the city was not yet destroyed and the temple was still standing. Nebuchadnezzar, the King of Babylon, came along and destroyed the city about 100 years later. About 160 years after Isaiah's writing, the temple was completed because a Persian king named Cyrus gave the decree to rebuild the city and the temple.

The American Peoples Encyclopedia Vol.11, pg.395 dates the time of Isaiah's death at about 668 BC. The same volume on pg. 611 states that Nebuchadnezzar destroyed the city and the temple in 586 BC. In Volume 6 pg.688-689 of The American Peoples Encyclopedia, we find that Cyrus liberated the Jews and allowed them to return to rebuild Jerusalem and even restored sacred vessels taken from the temple. This took place around 539 BC; the new temple was completed in 515 BC (Vol.11, pg .611 A17).

Fulfilled prophecies are evidence of the existence of God because we have recorded communication from Him in the Bible.

Topic Index

I know that god exist because:

God has shared scientific facts that have been proven accurate, long before that fact was "discovered" by man.

I would like to mention one area where science and the Bible do meet together.

> *Job 26:7: "He stretches out the north over empty space, and hangs the earth on nothing."*

Keep in mind that Job lived almost 2,000 years before Christ. That the earth was suspended on nothing was not even considered by scientists for thousands of years after Job. Now, with our satellites and trips into space, we know this to be true — but such was not known in Job's day. The Egyptians declared that the earth rested on pillars. The Greeks said that it was carried on the back of Atlas. People believed many things, but they did not come close to what we know to be true today, and what Job declared a few thousand years ago.

Table of Contents pg 1, 2, 3, 4
Topic Index

I know that god exist because:

God was here in human form 2,000 years ago. There are historical records of this fact. His testimony is credible because His death and resurrection were foretold before He was born. He Himself also predicted His resurrection, and there were more than 500 eyewitnesses who saw Jesus during a period of forty days after His resurrection. Jesus even appeared to unbelievers. The resurrection of Jesus is historical fact that can stand in a court of law. The Bible says Jesus is God.

I know God exists because God was here in the form of man (Philippians 2:5-11).

I know God exists because God was here in the form of man. Jesus claimed to be God in John 10:30-33; even His enemies understood His claim when he stated, *"I and the Father are one."* Furthermore, He acknowledged He was God to Thomas (John 20:28-29). Jesus claimed to be from heaven (John 6:38). The Bible also tells us that Jesus is the creator (Colossians 1:15-16).

Jesus claimed to be God — but did He leave us any evidence of this fact? Yes, He did! With the Dead Sea Scrolls we can verify that all of the prophecies concerning Jesus were written before Jesus was born through Mary. There are numerous prophecies concerning the Messiah that Jesus fulfilled, including His death and resurrection. Without even using the Bible we can show reasonable evidence that Jesus rose from the dead.

Topic Index

I know that god exist because:

There are numerous accounts of people who have been clinically dead who have later revived to give accounts of God, Heaven, and Hell.

Many people have had “after-death” experiences; having been declared clinically dead, people have later revived, and have relayed information to us concerning heaven and hell. The Lazarus Phenomenon DVD gives an account of an African Pastor named Daniel Ekechukwu who died in a car accident in Nigeria. He later returned to tell of his experience. Secondly, Ian McCormack, a young surfer from New Zealand, died and returned after being stung by the box jellyfish [H2]

“The Search For Heaven” is a documentary DVD which examines the scientific studies, personal testimonies, and experiences of those who have had near-death experiences.[H3] Some of these personal testimonies are more evidence that God exists.

Table of Contents pg 1, 2, 3, 4
Topic Index

I know that god exist because:

Great scientific minds of both the past and the present have continually believed in the existence of God.

Well-known scientists from the past who believed in God include Leonardo da Vinci — although more famous for his paintings, da Vinci was also a scientist who believed in God. [A40]

Isaac Newton, famous for discovering gravity, was a Christian who spent much time studying Biblical prophecies. Concerning the prophecies in Daniel, [A40] Newton once said *"to reject Daniel is to reject the Christian religion".*

Dr A. E. Wilder-Smith (1915-1995) was once an atheist only to become one of our leading creationists

Now let's discuss arguments against the existence of God. How can anyone prove that something does not exist? To know that something does not exist anywhere, you would have to obtain all knowledge of everyplace, at all times.

Don't forget that we can offer sound evidence as to the existence of God. In a court of law we can rely on "circumstantial" evidence. In a murder trial, we might have a gun and the ballistic report saying that the offending bullet came from that gun; the fingerprints of the defendant are also on the weapon. Worse yet for our defendant, we can establish motive and opportunity. Faced with all of this circumstantial evidence, a jury might well convict the defendant of murder — even without an eyewitness.

I have offered circumstantial evidence in points 1-8 for you to consider, showing that God does, in fact, exist!

Many people say that the apparent evil in the world is an effective argument against God's existence. I would argue that what someone thinks God should — or shouldn't — do about evil does not prove or disprove God's existence. If a police officer allows a car to run a red light without ticketing the driver — the police officer is no less real. What the officer — what God — chooses to do in any given situation is a matter of character, not a proof of nonexistence. The character of God is a very important discussion to have — but it is its own decision, and does not belong in a debate concerning His very existence. To totally wipe out sin and the effects of sin by mankind, this world as we know it would have to be destroyed — and it will be in God's time.

When you find yourself in a debate regarding the existence of God, pay close attention to how your opponent is defining key points and ideas. People in debates are often trapped by agreeing to false terms and false definitions.

Topic Index

Table of Contents pg 1, 2, 3, 4

Jesus is different than all other religious leaders in history. He was told about before in detail before he was born. He claimed to be God from heaven. He did miracles. He predicted his own death and resurrection. Then he actually rose from the dead. There is indeed evidence to support this.

You can click on **"Jesus VS all other religions"** to start reading at the beginning of this topic or use the page index to jump to the part that interest you most.

Overview of content in this section is as follows:

Jesus Versus all other Religions (pg. 235)

Evolution or Creation (pg. 235)

Darwin said by chance was absurd (pg. 235)

Ancient or new religion? (pg. 236)

If it sounds good does that make it true? (pg. 236)

Isn't there truth in all religions? (pg. 237)

What makes Jesus any more credible than other religious leaders of ancient times? (pg. 237)

Table of Contents pg 1, 2, 3, 4

WHAT MAKES CHRISTIANITY AND JESUS UNIQUE COMPARED TO OTHER RELIGIONS?

Whether you are atheist, agnostic, or a believer in some form of religion, you must first answer the age-old question, "Where did man come from?" Essentially, there are two choices.

> All life came into being by pure chance. Through the chain of evolution, man evolved from some sort of organism.

Those who hold to this position actually exercise more faith than those who hold to the belief of Christianity (creationism). Throughout all known history, no one has ever witnessed evolution taking place. A tadpole may turn into a frog, but for a frog to turn into a prince is a fairy tale, not science.

In the book ***What is Creation Science?*** By Henry Morris and Gary Parker, we find some interesting quotes and comments concerning this (pages 2, 86 and 88):

> "However, as the eminent Harvard biologist Ernst Mayr, one of the nation's top evolutionists, has observed: 'Darwin never really did discuss the origin of species in his ***On the Origin of Species***' (Niles Eldredge, 1985a). Not only could Darwin not cite a single example of a new species originating, but neither has anyone else, in all the subsequent century of evolutionary study."

Topic Index

> ."Darwin himself was acutely aware of this evidence of creation and the problem it posed for his theory. In a chapter of ***Origin of Species*** called 'Difficulties with the Theory', he included traits that depend on separate meaningless parts. Consider the human eye with the different features required to focus at different distances, to accommodate different amounts of light, and to correct for the 'rainbow effect'. Regarding the origin of the eye,
>
> **Darwin wrote these words:** *'To suppose that the eye (with so many parts all working together)...could have been formed by natural selection, seems**, I freely confess, absurd to the highest degree**.'* A11
>
> 'Absurd to the highest degree.' That's Darwin's own opinion of using natural selection to explain the origin of traits that depend on many parts working together."

One could go into much more detail on evolution, but that is not our purpose here. It is sufficient to say that the theory of evolution is based upon faith, not science.

Table of Contents pg 1, 2, 3, 4
Topic Index

We were created by some sort of God.

Believing in creationism leads to the question, “Does this God communicate with mankind?” Most people will logically answer “yes” to this — otherwise they are left with the dilemma of wondering why a supreme being would bother to create at all, if He was only to then ignore His creation. Most people who believe in a God also believe that He communicates with mankind, thus forming what we call “religion”. If we are created by God and this God communicates with mankind, we should be able to look back into history and find record of this communication. Certainly mankind would record something of such great importance and magnitude. Logic should then tell us that if there is a "true religion", this religion should be ancient, as God and mankind have been around a very long time. Records of communication between them should date back to days of antiquity.

There are numerous religions today that cannot be traced back to ancient times. These would include such groups as Scientology, Christian Science, Jehovah Witnesses and Mormons (L.D.S.), to name just a few. Scientology stems from L.Ron Hubbard, who was born in 1911. Christian Science is traced back to Mary Baker Eddy in the 1800s. Jehovah Witnesses and the Watchtower Bible and Tract Society are traced back to Charles Taze Russell in the 1800s. Mormonism, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, is traced back to Joseph Smith in the 1800s. What these religions all have in common is that they are relatively new. Groups such as these may try to claim connection to the New Testament itself. However, their doctrines of Who and what God is, as well as other important major doctrines, such as what salvation is and how it is obtained, can only be traced back to the founders of their religion. Certainly truth concerning God should be just as true today as it was 200 years ago, or even a thousand years ago. If this same truth was known as far back as ancient days, shouldn't we be able to find some record of it? I believe that it is reasonable to expect to find some such record. If a religion’s doctrines concerning God and salvation cannot be found in writings from even a thousand years ago, why should we believe it?

Topic Index

Some people base their beliefs on what “sounds good” to them. Is something true simply because it sounds good or is a profound statement? To accept something as true based only on feeling is not rational. Christianity is not a blind faith. There is plenty of evidence to show that Jesus is much more than just a great man. There is also ample evidence to show the Bible is not just a collection of books. Rather the evidence of 100 percent accuracy in Bible prophecy points to divine inspiration.

Table of Contents pg 1, 2, 3, 4

The doctrines concerning God, in Christianity, do not just “sound good”. The Bible is confirmed to be the Word of God by fulfilled prophecy. There is also confirmation in its accuracy found in archaeology. The doctrines concerning God in Christianity can also be traced to the reformation period and on through the Catholic Church. From there, they can be further traced through the writings of the early church fathers and finally, connected to the disciples and the New Testament itself. The New Testament connects to the Old Testament, or Judaism. Before the New Testament, Judaism was looking forward to the coming of the Messiah. There are numerous prophecies in the Old Testament pertaining to this Messiah. Jesus actually fulfilled these prophecies. This is our evidence that He is the Messiah, or the Christ that was to come. In short, in Christianity, we can trace the doctrines concerning God and His nature, as well as salvation, from the present times all the way back to the book of Genesis, and then all the way back to where we are told of creation itself.

Topic Index

We are looking for a religion of antiquity because God and man have both been around a long time. Therefore the records of communication between God and man should go back a long time. There are of course, other religions of antiquity, such as the Islamic religion (Muslims), or the followers of Buddha. Some people would ask, "Why not accept these records as well?", or, **"Isn't there truth in all religions?"** Different religions make such drastically different claims about God; it is impossible for all religions to be correct. For example, Christianity says God is knowable (John 17:3). On the other hand, Islam teaches that God is unknowable. To the Muslim it would be blasphemous to say that God is Spirit. Jesus, however, informs us that the Father is Spirit (John 4:24). There are numerous such contradictions between Christianity and other religions, whether ancient or new.

Topic Index

The next logical question is,**” What makes Jesus any more credible than other religious leaders of ancient times,** such as Buddha or Muhammad?” The answer to this lies in the credentials of Jesus himself. Unlike other religious leaders, Jesus was foretold in great detail before He was even born. There are numerous prophecies that Jesus fulfilled, such as the bloodline He would be born through (Genesis 22:18, Matthew 1:1), where He would be born (Micah 5:2, Matthew 2:1), and how He would be betrayed (Psalm 41:9, Zechariah 11:12-13, John 13:21-26, Matthew 27:5-7). The Dead Sea Scrolls confirm the fact that the prophecies were written long before Jesus was born. Jesus also performed many miracles, offering them as evidence as to who He was (John 10:36-39). The fact that Jesus performed what the people considered miracles is confirmed outside of the Bible. No other religious leader has performed miracles that are confirmed by other credible historic sources. Jesus predicted His own death and resurrection, and then actually rose from the dead. No other religious leader in history has ever done this. Truly no other religious leader in history even comes close to these types of credentials.

Buddha, Muhammad, Confucius, and other ancient leaders did not perform any miracles that were verified by credible historical sources. They were not foretold in detailed prophecies before they were born. Last of all, they did not rise from the dead. When Buddha, Muhammad, Confucius, and other ancient leaders died, they remained dead!

This makes what Jesus has to say more credible than what Buddha, Muhammad, or Confucius may have said. Let us also not forget that Jesus claimed to be the only way in which mankind could come to God the Father (John 14:6). All evidence shows that we can either choose Jesus or cling to some other hope that does not have any real substance or credibility in known facts. Which will you choose?

Keep in mind that the "one true church" is not a denomination, but rather a body of believers in which major doctrines are consistent.

Topic Index

Table of Contents pg 1, 2, 3, 4

Is the story of Jonah just a big fish story or a real person in history? Jesus spoke of Jonah as a real person. There are other ancient sources that speak of Jonah as a real person. Furthermore other people have been swallowed whole and lived.

You can click on "The Story of Jonah" to start reading at the beginning of this topic or use the topic index to jump to the part that interest you most.

Overview of content in this section is as follows:

Topic Index

Isn't the story of Jonah just a big fish story?

Overview of content in this section is as follows:

Isn't the story of Jonah just a big fish story? (pg. 240)

Jonah was an actual person (pg. 240)

Archaeological evidence concerning the book of Jonah (pg. 242)

The idea of Jonah being swallowed by a great fish is not impossible (pg. 244)

Lessons from Jonah (pg. 246)

Poem (pg. 247)

Table of Contents pg 1, 2, 3, 4
Topic Index

ISN'T THE STORY OF JONAH JUST A BIG FISH STORY?

We have all heard of some tall tale that fishermen have told. Unfortunately many people put the story of Jonah in this same category. It is a tremendous story and it does involve a great fish. However in this case it is not an invented story, but rather a "historical account" about a real person — the prophet Jonah. In this newsletter we will examine the reliability of the Book of Jonah. We will also glean some lessons from Jonah that are applicable today.

We will consider these three areas in our study of Jonah (all underline, bold, and italic emphasis in this chapter is mine):

Jonah was as actual person.
Archaeological evidence concerning the Book of Jonah.
The feasibility of Jonah having been swallowed by a big fish.

Jonah was an actual person.

The *Encyclopedaea Britannica* refers to our Biblical Jonah as, "Jonah mentioned in II Kings 14:25 who prophesied during the reign of Jeroboam II, about 785 BC."[G2]

Flavius Josephus was a Jewish historian and was a non-Christian who lived AD 37-93.The following is from *The Works of Josephus*, Chapter 10: "In the fifteenth year of the reign of Amaziah, Jeroboam the son of Joash reigned over Israel in Samaria forty years "Jeroboam made an expedition against the Syrians, and overran all their country, as Jonah had foretold. Now I cannot but think it necessary for me, who have promised to give an accurate account of our affairs, to describe the actions of this prophet, so far as I have found them written down in the Hebrew books. Jonah had been commanded by God to go to the kingdom of Nineveh; and, when he was there, to publish it in that city; how it should lose the dominion it had over the nations. .." *(Josephus then gives the account of Jonah as we find in the Bible, and then concludes :)* "Now, I have given this account about him, as I found it written [in our books]."[D2] **(PDF pg. 371)**

Note that this first century historian started talking about Jonah as an actual person before he gave the biblical account of Jonah as was written in their books. He also stated that "Jeroboam made an expedition against the Syrians, and overran all their country, as Jonah had foretold." Josephus describes Jonah as acting as a prophet before going into the Biblical account. The logical conclusion is that Josephus, a Jewish historian, considered Jonah to be an actual person in history.

Table of Contents pg 1, 2, 3, 4

Justin Martyr was a Christian writer AD 110–165. From "Dialogue of Justin", Chapter CVIII, *Ante-Nicene Fathers, Volume One* (1989):"And though all the men of your nation knew the incidents in the life of Jonah, and though Christ said amongst you that He would give the sign of Jonah, exhorting you to repent of your wicked deeds at least after He rose again from the dead, and to mourn before God as did the Nineties, in order that your nation and city might not be taken and destroyed, as they have been destroyed; yet you not only have not repented, after you learned that He rose from the dead."D1 **(PDF pg.221)**

So now Justin has declared to his readers that they knew of the incidents in Jonah's life as well as the repentance of the people of Nineveh. As we can see he expected his readers to know this story was true. There is little doubt that Justin believed Jonah was an actual person, and the repentance of the Ninevites was an actual event in history.

Another Christian writer in the first century also seemed to believe Jonah was an actual person as you can see from this quote from Irenaeus [AD 120-202]:"Irenaeus Against Heresies", Chapter XX, *Ante-Nicene Fathers, Volume One* (-1989):"Long-suffering therefore was God, when man became a defaulter, as foreseeing that victory which should be granted to him through the Word. For, when strength was made perfect in weakness, it showed the kindness and transcendent power of God. For as He patiently suffered Jonah to be swallowed by the whale, not that he should be swallowed up and perish altogether, but that, having been cast out again, he might be the more subject to God, and might glorify Him the more who had conferred upon him such an unhoped-for deliverance, and might bring the Ninevites to a lasting repentance."D1 **(PDF pg. 407)**

The most important witness declaring Jonah to be an actual person is Jesus Christ Himself. Matthew 12:39-41(NIV):"*He answered, 'A wicked and adulterous generation asks for a miraculous sign! But none will be given it except the sign of the prophet Jonah. For as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of a huge fish, so the Son of Man will be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth. The men of Nineveh will stand up at the judgment with this generation and condemn it; for they repented at the preaching of Jonah, and now one greater than Jonah is here."* Jesus compared Jonah's time in the fish to His own coming death and resurrection. Why would Jesus use Jonah as an illustration if Jonah in the belly of the fish were merely a myth? Jesus also declared that the people of Nineveh would stand in judgment against them because they repented at the preaching of Jonah. Obviously Jesus believed the book of Jonah to be an accurate historical record. We can ask for no greater witness to the reliability of the book of Jonah than that of the Creator himself (Colossians 1:13-16, John 1:3, Hebrews 1:2.).

As we have previously written, Jesus was foretold in some detail before He was even born. Jesus performed miracles, offering them as evidence for His claims. Jesus predicted His own death and resurrection. There is historical evidence giving confirmation that Jesus really rose from the dead. No other person in history can make this kind of claim. Our conclusion is the testimony of Jesus Christ is greater than that of any man; and He believed the book of Jonah to be an accurate historical record.

Table of Contents pg 1, 2, 3, 4
Topic Index

Archaeological evidence concerning the Book of Jonah:

The incredible thing about the Bible is that it constantly mentions people, places, and things which are often criticized until proven to be true. Archaeology has confirmed the Bible time and time again. Here we will use it to show that Nineveh actually existed. Why does its existence matter? It is added confirmation that the Bible is an accurate historical record. Prophecies of course, have given confirmation that the Bible is an accurate divine record. Archaeology has given confirmation that many of the places mentioned in the Bible actually existed. Many of these places, before they were discovered by archaeological diggings, were unheard of except what is mentioned in the Bible.

Following is a quote from Keller's *The Bible as History* (1956, pages 9-10):

"About the middle of the nineteenth century, all over Egypt, Mesopotamia, and Palestine investigations and excavations had started in response to a suddenly awakened desire to get a scientifically reliable picture of man's history in this part of the world. The goal of a long succession of expeditions was the Middle East.

"Until then the Bible had been the only historical source for our knowledge of that part of Asia before about 550 BC. Only the Bible had anything to say about a period of history that stretched back into the dim twilight of the past. In the Bible peoples and names cropped up about which even the Greeks and Romans no longer knew anything.

"Scholars swarmed impetuously into these lands of the ancient East. What these men with infinite pains extracted from the desert sand by the Mesopotamia and Egypt deserved indeed the attention of all mankind. Here, for the first time, science had forced open the door into the mysterious world of the Bible.

"The French vice-consul in Mosul, Paul-Emile Botta, was an enthusiastic archaeologist. In 1843 he began to dig at Khorsabad on the Tigris and from the ruins of a four-thousand-year-old capital proudly brought to light the first witness to the Bible: Sargon, the fabulous ruler of Assyria. 'In the year that Tartan came unto Ashdod, when Sargon the king of Assyria sent him,' says **Isaiah 20:1**

"Two years later a young English diplomat and excavator, A.H. Layard, uncovered Nimrud (Kalchu), the city which the Bible calls Calah **(Genesis 10:11)** and which now bears the name of the Nimrod of the Bible: 'a mighty hunter before the Lord. And the beginning of his kingdom was Babel and Erech, and Akkad and Calneh in the land of Shinar. **Out of that land went forth into Assyria and builded Ninevah** and Rehoboth-Ir and Calah **' (Genesis 10:10-11).**

Table of Contents pg 1, 2, 3, 4

"Shortly after that, excavations under the direction of an English major, Henry Creswicke Rawlinson, one of the foremost Assyriologist, **unearthed Nineveh**, the Assyrian capital with the famous library of King Ashurbanipal. This is the Nineveh whose wickedness the Biblical prophets constantly denounced. **(Jonah 1:2)."**[A8] (End of Quote)

We learn a little more about Nineveh in the following quote from *The Archaeological Encyclopedia of the Holy Land*(1990): "NINEVEH — The last capital of the Assyrian Empire, situated on the east bank of the Tigris (Hiddekel), opposite modern Mosul. The city was probably founded early in the 3rd millennium BC. During the reign of Sargon II it became one of the capitals of the Assyrian kingdom, and it was the sole capital during the reign of Sennacherib..."... "According to a chronicle of the Babylonian King Nebopolassar the united forces of the Chaldeans (Ur) and the Medians (Madai**) destroyed Nineveh in 612 BC**. Its destruction is vividly described by **Zephaniah (2:13–15).**The remains of Nineveh are hidden in two mounds on either bank of the Hawsar River. One is Kouyunjik Tepe, where the palaces of Esarhaddon and Ashurbanipal were discovered, and the other, on the south bank, is Nebi Younis (the Prophet Jonah), where the palace of Sennacherib stood." [D3]

From the preceding source, we discover that according to a chronicle of the Babylonian King Nebopolassar, Nineveh was destroyed in 612 BC, which is described by Zephaniah (2:13–15). In the Bible in Zephaniah 1:1 we learn just when Zephaniah wrote.
Zephaniah 1:1:"*The word of the LORD which came to Zephaniah son of Cushi, son of Gedaliah, son of Amariah, son of Hezekiah, **in the days of Josiah son of Amon, king of Judah***."

The *New Grolier Multimedia Encyclopedia* states the following: *"Josiah was the king of Judah, ancient Israel's southern kingdom, from c.640 to 609 BC."*[G1]

So we learn that Zephaniah foretold thee total destruction of Nineveh while it was still standing and flourishing.

One final source that I would like to quote concerning Nineveh is found in Unger's *Archaeology and the Old Testament*. On pages 89-90: "Nineveh (modern Kuyunjik) was the great capital of the late Assyrian Empire, located about 60 miles north of Ashur on the east bank of Tigris. So completely was it obliterated according to its prophesied destruction by Hebrew seers that the departed city became like a myth until its resurrection by Sir Austen Layard and others in the nineteenth century. With occupation levels going back as far as prehistoric times, the actual walled city has been traced to indicate an area three miles in length by less than a mile and a half in breadth. But the Hebrews (and perhaps other foreigners) were accustomed to include under the name Nineveh (like the complex of cities that forms modern New York), Calah, 18 miles south, Resen, between Calah and Nineveh proper, and Rehoboth-Ir, which 'must be Rebit-Ninua, west of the capital, since the names are not only etymologically related but have the same meaning'. These are the four places which are enumerated in Genesis 10:11, 12 as composing 'the great city', but other towns, such as Tarbisu, Dur-sharrukin or Sargon's burg, added to the aggregate size of "Nineveh" in the heyday of Assyrian empire." [A9]

Table of Contents pg 1, 2, 3, 4

From the sources that were already mentioned, we have learned that Jonah prophesied during the reign of Jeroboam II, about 785 BC. Josephus, a Jewish historian in the first century, as well as two early Christian writers and Jesus himself considered Jonah to be a real person in history. Jonah was sent to Nineveh to tell the Ninevehians to repent. Before Nineveh was discovered in the 1800s we only had the Biblical record of its existence. Although the people of Nineveh did repent at the preaching of Jonah, their ancestors did not follow in their footsteps. We have also seen that Zephaniah foretold the destruction of Nineveh around 640c-609 BC, which is at least 145 years after Jonah. Later Nineveh was destroyed in 612 BC which is somewhere between 3 to 28 years after Zephaniah foretold of its destruction. Furthermore, we found confirmation of the existence of King Sargon and other cities that the Bible mentions as well. Our conclusion is that the Bible, including the book of Jonah, is a historically reliable document.

Topic Index

The feasibility of Jonah having been swallowed by a big fish.

J. Vernon McGee, in his commentary on the book of Jonah, declares that he believes Jonah died in the fish and was resurrected. After looking into this matter, I am convinced that although this interpretation is possible, it reads more into the Bible than it actually says. McGee also quotes another book titled *The Bible Today* by Grace W. Kellogg which I would like to include for you here. This quote is in McGee's commentary on pg. 40-42.

"There are at least two known monsters of the deep that could easily have swallowed Jonah. They are the Balaenoptera Musculus or sulphur-bottom whale, and the Rhinodon Typicus or whale shark. Neither of these monsters of the deep have any teeth. They feed in an interesting way by opening their enormous mouths, submerging their lower jaw, and rushing through the water at terrific speed. After straining out the water, they swallow whatever is left. A sulphur-bottom whale, one hundred feet long, was captured off Cape Cod in 1933. His mouth was ten or twelve feet wide — so big he could have easily swallowed a horse. These whales have four to six compartments in their stomachs, in any one of which a colony of men could find free lodging. They might even have a choice of rooms, for in the head of this whale is an excellent air storage chamber, an enlargement of the nasal sinus, often measuring seven feet high, seven feet long, by fourteen feet long. If he has an unwelcome guest on board who gives him a headache, the whale swims to the nearest land and gets rid of the offender as he did Jonah.

“The *Cleveland Plain Dealer* recently quoted an article by Dr. Ransome Harvey, who said that a dog was lost overboard from a ship. It was found in the head of the whale six days later, alive and barking.

“Frank Bullen, F.R.G.S., who wrote *The Cruise of the Cathalot*, tells of a shark fifteen feet in length which was found in the stomach of a whale. He says that when dying the whale ejects the contents of its stomach.

"The late Dr. Dixon stated that in a museum at Beirut, Syria, there is a head of a whale shark big enough to swallow the largest man that history records! He also tells of a white shark of the Mediterranean which swallowed whole horse; another swallowed a reindeer, minus only its horns. In still another Mediterranean white shark, was found (about the size of an ox).

"These facts show that Jonah could have been swallowed by either a whale or a shark. But has any other man besides Jonah been swallowed and lived to tell the tale? We know of two such instances.

"The famous French scientist, M. de Parville, writes of James Bartley, who in the region of the Falkland Islands near South America, was supposed to have been drowned at sea. Two days after his disappearance, the sailors made a catch of a whale. When it was cut up, much to their surprise, they found their missing friend — alive but unconscious, inside the whale. He revived and has been enjoying the best of health ever since his adventure.

"Dr. Harry Rimmer, President of Research Science Bureau of Los Angeles, writes of another case."In the Literary Digest we noticed an account of an English sailor who was swallowed by a gigantic Rhinodon in the English Channel. Briefly the account stated that in the attempt to harpoon one of these monstrous sharks, this sailor fell overboard, and before he could be picked up again, the shark turned and engulfed him. Forty-eight hours after the accident occurred, the fish was sighted and slain. When the shark was opened by the sailors, they were amazed to find the man unconscious but alive! He was rushed to the hospital and found to be suffering from shock alone, and a few hours later was discharged as being physically fit. The account concluded by saying that the man was on exhibit in a London Museum at a shilling admittance fee; being advertised as 'The Jonah of the Twentieth Century.'"

"In 1926 Dr. Rimmer met this man, and writes that his physical appearance was odd; his body was devoid of hair and patches of yellowish-brown color covered his entire skin." (This concludes the quote in McGee's commentary which originally came from *The Bible Today* by Grace W. Kellogg.) [A10] (End of Quote)

As you can see it is certainly not an impossible event for Jonah to have been swallowed by a great fish and remained alive. Does this mean that it was only an unusual event and not a divine intervention by God? No, not at all! In Jonah 1:17 we learn that the LORD appointed a great fish to swallow Jonah. Then in Jonah 2:10 we see that the LORD commanded the fish, and it vomited Jonah up onto the dry land. We know of no one besides Jonah who was swallowed alive and then vomited on land by the fish. This happened because the Lord caused it to happen. This is not the only miraculous event in the book of Jonah. The plant which came up overnight and perished overnight also was divine intervention (Jonah 4:6-10). Of course the greatest miracle of all recorded in the Book of Jonah is that all of Nineveh repented! The skeptic needs to remember that just because the Bible records miracles does not mean that it is not true. The great mound of evidence for the veracity of the Bible points to the contrary. How can this be? It is because the Bible is what it claims to be, the written Word of God!

Table of Contents pg 1, 2, 3, 4
Topic Index

LESSONS FROM JONAH

To really understand what is being said in this section, it would be very helpful if you would sit down, open your Bible and read the Book of Jonah before you continue reading this newsletter. It is a very short book which only has four chapters, or about 1,344 words. A person can sit down and easily read it in ten to fifteen minutes.

It is never too late to pray. Sometimes we believe that circumstances have gone too far. If you were out in the ocean, thrown out of a boat and then swallowed by a great fish, you might tend to think that your fate had been sealed. We need to remember that nothing is too hard for the Lord. This happened to Jonah and it was not the end for him.

You cannot run away from God. Jonah was told by God to go in one direction — so Jonah ran in the opposite direction, and still managed to run right into God. Even when he was confronted by the sailors on the boat he did not repent, but rather he told the sailors to throw him overboard. Did his stubbornness save him from going to Nineveh? No. He thought he would rather die and told the sailors to throw him overboard. Then, apparently after being thrown overboard and swallowed by a great fish, he had a change of heart and repented. Jonah could have saved himself a lot of trouble by being obedient to God. This is a good lesson for us. We cannot run away from God. The Lord is everywhere that we may choose to flee. It would be much easier for us to be obedient in the first place. We may not encounter anything as drastic as what Jonah went through, but we are told that whom the Lord loves He disciplines (Hebrews 12:6).

God has control of circumstances, even over nature. God caused the storm which tossed about the ship that Jonah was on. God told the fish to swallow Jonah, and then to vomit him up on shore. God caused the plant to grow which provided shade for Jonah. God also appointed the worm that killed the plant. This was all for a lesson for Jonah, because he was not obedient.

God is gracious and compassionate. God is slow to anger and abundant in loving kindness (Jonah 4:2). God could have easily simply killed Jonah when he took off for Tarshish, instead of going to Nineveh like he was told. Instead God dealt with him through a process of circumstances until he was willing to go. Not only that, but we know that God hates sin. Nineveh would have been destroyed if they did not repent. Sodom and Gomorrah serve as a good example of what the Lord could have done (Genesis 18:17-19:25). Instead God sent Jonah to warn them so that they would repent instead. This is because the Lord would much rather have people turn from their wicked ways and repent, than destroy them (Ezekiel 33:11). From our perspective we might be tempted to side with Jonah. There are reasons why Jonah would not want to go to Nineveh. He was afraid that the people would repent and God would forgive them (Jonah 4:2). Jonah wanted them destroyed, not forgiven. There are many reasons why perhaps Jonah would not want them to be forgiven. We can only speculate as to what exactly those reasons were, since the Bible does not tell us. Put yourself in Jonah's place: if you disliked someone enough that you wanted him destroyed, would you then want to be the messenger to perhaps save him? We need to remember that we are told to love our enemies, do good to those who hate us, bless those who curse us and pray for those who mistreat us (Luke 6:27-28). This is certainly easier said than done; yet, until we do this, we are in the same boat as Jonah, being disobedient to the Lord.

Topic Index

RUNNING FROM GOD

Death will come upon me soon
I think it's time to change my tune

if my heart’s not right with God
He will bury me in the sod.

I grieved the Holy Spirit today
because from God I ran away

He warned me of discipline to come
and there is nowhere to run

I must repent and turn to Him
and He will forgive me of my sin

Yes I think it's time to change my tune
or death will come upon me soon.

By Robert Kiser

Topic Index

Table of Contents pg 1, 2, 3, 4

A DEFENSE OF MIRACLES

"If we admit God, must we admit miracle? Indeed, indeed, you have no security against it. That is the bargain."
C.S Lewis

People often reject the Bible because it mentions things like God, judgment and miracles. But the Bible has been confirmed time and time again to be historically accurate. The parts that we can look to for verification are in fact confirmed. Countless archaeological digs have confirmed much of the history of the Bible. Not only does history confirm the Bible, but details in science provide evidence as well. For example Job 26:7 tells us that God "hangs the earth on nothing". Space exploration has shown that the earth is indeed suspended in space. Job lived long before space exploration, though; in fact, he lived a few thousand years before Christ. So, how did he know that? Throughout history, critics have attacked the Bible because of its claims and failed to disprove it. Concerning that fact I would like to share a quote with you.
Time Magazine Dec. 30, 1974: "After more than two centuries of facing the heaviest scientific guns that could be brought to bear, the bible has survived and perhaps better for the siege even on the critics' own terms. Historical fact, the scriptures seem more acceptable now than they did when the rationalist began the attack." [B1]

When we consider miracles, it is obvious that Jesus performed more public miracles than anybody. Jesus said that these works or miracles were in fact proof of His claims of who He was.

John 10:24-33:

The Jews therefore gathered around Him, and were saying to Him, "How long will You keep us in suspense? If You are the Christ, tell us plainly."

Jesus answered them, "I told you, and you do not believe; the works that I do in My Father's name, these bear witness of Me.

But you do not believe, because you are not of My sheep.

My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me;

and I give eternal life to them, and they shall never perish; and no one shall snatch them out of My hand.

My Father, who has given them to Me, is greater than all; and no one is able to snatch them out of the Father's hand.

I and the Father are one."

The Jews took up stones again to stone Him.

Jesus answered them, "I showed you many good works from the Father; for which of them are you stoning Me?"

The Jews answered Him, "For a good work we do not stone You, but for blasphemy; and because You, being a man, make Yourself out to be God." (NAS)

Table of Contents pg 1, 2, 3, 4

John 14:9-11:

Jesus said to him, "Have I been so long with you, and yet you have not come to know Me, Philip? He who has seen Me has seen the Father; how do you say, 'Show us the Father'?

Do you not believe that I am in the Father, and the Father is in Me? The words that I say to you I do not speak on My own initiative, but the Father abiding in Me does His works.

Believe Me that I am in the Father, and the Father in Me; otherwise believe on account of the works themselves. (NAS)

Here we see that Jesus offered His works, or miracles, as evidence of His identity. Are we to now say that miracles are not possible when Jesus offered them as evidence? Jesus and the New Testament writers taught of good moral values and truth. It would be a huge contradiction if those who taught that we should be moral and not lie were in fact very immoral and spreading lies about miracles themselves.

The Bible is interlaced with history, and miracles that some still question has been confirmed true. It is not logical to disbelieve the Bible based on a preconceived notion that "miracles are not possible".

Some argue against miracles because the event in question only happened once, and cannot be repeated. They say, "I did not see it happen, and it cannot be repeated, therefore I do not believe it." By that logic we could say the person extending that argument does not exist —Did you see them born? Can that rare event be repeated? No! The same can be said for the formation of the universe — it only happened once and cannot be repeated — yet here we are. There is one point concerning the numerous miracles that were performed publically by Jesus that should not be overlooked, and that is the Church itself. Consider for a moment where and during what time period the Church was born. It was born in the same area and during the same time frame as the miracles that were performed by Jesus. The Gospels and the accounts of the things that Jesus did were being circulated among the same cities that the events and miracles actually took place. You would think that church growth would be impossible if the incredible stories contained in the Gospels were just fabricated lies!

For example — imagine that someone today started spreading news articles stating that the President was performing public miracles in Los Angeles, California. Furthermore, the articles themselves were spread all over Los Angeles, California. How many people in Los Angeles would believe these stories if there were no eyewitnesses they could talk to? How many of them would be willing to die for this belief? Thousands of people in the geographical area and during the same time when Jesus performed public miracles believed. These same people were persecuted for their beliefs, and many died martyrs for their faith in Christ. We have no writings from anybody during that time period that claim the miracles never happened. If reports of miracles were all fabrications, then you would think there would be written documentation of the fabrication. On the contrary, it was only years later (after all of the eyewitnesses were dead) that people began to claim that the miracles never happened!

What does all of this have to do with us today? First, it shows us that the Bible is true and reliable. The same Jesus who performed miracles is our Lord and Savior. He can, and still does, perform miracles today. Granted, we do not see numerous public miracles today, but at that time, He was offering them as evidence of who He claimed to be. This is evidence that we can still look to ourselves when considering His claims. There are many periods throughout Biblical history when there were not public miracles. Just because we do not see numerous public miracles, does not mean that they do not happen. This is something you may want to remember as you kneel before the Lord in prayer.

Table of Contents pg 1, 2, 3, 4

DO ALL MIRACLES COME FROM GOD?

People have often given an account of some miraculous event as the reason for their faith in a particular church or doctrine. By using miraculous experiences to determine truth people have joined false religions and believed false doctrines. We must not interpret the Bible by personal experience. Rather we must interpret our experiences in light of the Bible. We can show this truth in the Bible by examining two points.

The Bible tells us that we should test the spirits to see if they are from God.

The Bible tells us that not all signs, wonders or miraculous events are from God. Satan is out to deceive people to lead them away from the truth. He is more than willing to use his own power to trick people into believing a lie.

The Bible tells us that we should test the spirits to see if they are from God.

I John 4:1-3 (all underline, bold, and italic emphasis in this chapter mine): "Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God; because many false prophets have gone out into the world. By this you know the Spirit of God: every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God; and every spirit that does not confess Jesus is not from God; and this is the spirit of the antichrist, of which you have heard that it is coming, and now it is already in the world."

Here we are told that we can recognize these deceiving spirits by what they say about Jesus Christ. So what did John mean when he said that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh? Well this same writer tells us what he meant, in the Gospel of John — John 1:1 and 14: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." (Verse 14) "And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth."

The Word was God and God became flesh, and dwelt among us. In other words those who deny that Jesus was God in the flesh are teaching the spirit of the antichrist. Let's say a person in a false church that denies this truth experiences some sort of miracle within this false church. Does this show that the person belongs to a true church? No, of course not, because not all miracles are from God. We should examine any church or person performing miracles in the light of what they teach about Jesus. (See also 1 Thessalonians 5:21, Acts 17:11, Proverbs 14:15, Romans 16:17-18, 2 Peter 2:1.)

Table of Contents pg 1, 2, 3, 4

The Bible tells us that not all signs, wonders, or miraculous events are from God.

Deuteronomy 13:1-5: "If a prophet or a dreamer of dreams arises among you and gives you a sign or a wonder, and the sign or the wonder comes true, concerning which he spoke to you, saying, 'Let us go after other gods (whom you have not known) and let us serve them,' you shall not listen to the words of that prophet or that dreamer of dreams; for the LORD your God is testing you to find out if you love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul. You shall follow the LORD your God and fear Him; and you shall keep His commandments, listen to His voice, serve Him, and cling to Him. But that prophet or that dreamer of dreams shall be put to death, because he has counseled rebellion against the LORD your God who brought you from the land of Egypt and redeemed you from the house of slavery, to seduce you from the way in which the LORD your God commanded you to walk. So you shall purge the evil from among you."

Exodus 7:10-12: "So Moses and Aaron came to Pharaoh, and thus they did just as the LORD had commanded; and Aaron threw his staff down before Pharaoh and his servants, and it became a serpent. Then Pharaoh also called for the wise men and the sorcerers, and they also, the magicians of Egypt, did the same with their secret arts. For each one threw down his staff and they turned into serpents. But Aaron's staff swallowed up their staffs."

Matthew 7:22-23: "Many will say to Me on that day, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in Your name, and in Your name cast out demons, and in Your name perform many miracles?' And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness.'"

Matthew 24:24: "For false Christs and false prophets will arise and will show great signs and wonders, so as to mislead, if possible, even the elect."

Thessalonians 2:8-9: "And then that lawless one will be revealed whom the Lord will slay with the breath of His mouth and bring to an end by the appearance of His coming; that is, the one whose coming is in accord with the activity of Satan, with all power and signs and false wonders."

Revelation 13:12-14: "And he exercises all the authority of the first beast in his presence. And he makes the earth and those who dwell in it to worship the first beast, whose fatal wound was **healed**. And he performs great signs, so that he even makes fire come down out of heaven to the earth in the presence of men. And he deceives those who dwell on the earth because of the signs which it was given him to perform in the presence of the beast, telling those who dwell on the earth to make an image to the beast who had the wound of the sword and has come to life."

Table of Contents pg 1, 2, 3, 4

Revelation 16:13-14: “And I saw coming out of the mouth of the dragon and out of the mouth of the beast and out of the mouth of the false prophet, three unclean spirits like frogs; for they are spirits of demons, performing signs, which go out to the kings of the whole world, to gather them together for the war of the great day of God, the Almighty.”

In summary, if we do not want to be deceived we must interpret all miracles from personal experience or otherwise in the light of Gods' written word (The Holy Bible). We must test the spirits to see whether they are from God.

Table of Contents pg 1, 2, 3, 4

A GLIMPSE INTO THE HEART OF GOD

I would like to share one of my favorite verses that I believe shows us a little bit of the heart and nature of God.

Ezekiel 33:11: "Say to them, 'As I live!' declares the Lord GOD, 'I take no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but rather that the wicked turn from his way and live. Turn back, turn back from your evil ways! Why then will you die, O house of Israel?'"

Now we know that God is a loving God, but we also know that he is a God of justice. By His own nature He cannot allow sin to go unpunished. Notice He takes no pleasure in the death of the wicked. However to let sin go unpunished and unrepentant is not an option. We are told He would rather have people turn away from their wicked ways so that they could live. Why would God rather have us turn from our wicked ways? Because He really cares and would rather love us, then punish us! Notice also that He repeats himself — "Turn back, turn back". It would seem that He is pleading for us to turn so that He does not have to punish us. Think about that for a minute. We are talking about the Creator of the universe here. We have an all-powerful God, pleading with mankind. Why? Because His love is real. Next we read, "Why then will you die?" He is also trying to reason with us. What reason can we give to not turn away from certain destruction? At the same time, turn to a God that loves us so much that He Himself paid the penalty of our sins, purchasing the church with His own blood (Acts 20:28, John 3:16-21).

Table of Contents pg 1, 2, 3, 4

DO BABIES GO TO HEAVEN?

Parents who have lost a child are often understandably plagued by this question. They realize that to go to heaven you must make a conscious decision accepting Jesus Christ. So what about the child who was not old enough to make a decision such as this? We can find the answer to this in a story in the Bible, 2 Samuel 11:2 - 2 Samuel 12:23. This is the story in which David lusted after Bathsheba, who was the wife of Uriah. David had Uriah sent off to war, on the front lines so he would be killed. Then, David felt he could take Bathsheba for himself. David's plan succeeded. He married Bathsheba and had a child with her. After this had taken place, David was confronted by the Prophet Nathan. He was told because of this awful thing he had done, the child born to him by Bathsheba would die. The child then got very sick and David began to fast and pray hoping the Lord would let the child live. When the child died he quit fasting and the servants asked him why? David responded, **"Why should I fast? Can I bring him back again? I shall go to him, but he will not return to me."** David knew that the child was not old enough to consciously acknowledge God. Still David expected to be with him after he himself died. David was told his sin was forgiven even though he would still suffer consequences because of it. So it is reasonable to also say David still believed he himself would go to heaven. In order for David to go to be with the child, the child would have to be in heaven. So yes, babies do go to heaven. We know not everyone goes to heaven, so it would seem, there is some age at which we become accountable. The Bible, however, does not tell us what that age might be.

BABIES

Babies are God's special gift
some people tell me of what I missed
a little child I wouldn't mind
but there is a reason to this rhyme
I don't need a child of my own
if my heart's not made of stone
there are children everywhere
with the need of love that some don't share
I don't need a child of my own
I need a heart not made of stone.

By Robert Kiser

Table of Contents pg 1, 2, 3, 4

WHO DO YOU ENVY?

I would like to share with you a lesson that the Lord once taught me. I found myself wanting to model myself after others that I saw in Christian ministry, and at times found myself even a little bit jealous of them. As Christians, we know that we are not to covet anything that anyone else has. But secretly, when one has nothing, it is easy to sometimes look at others who seem to have been blessed with everything, and ask, “Why not me?” I am not perfect and I have had moments like that. On one of these occasions I shrugged it off and began reading my Bible. The following passage is one the Lord used to get my attention.

Mark 12:38-44: “38) And in His teaching He was saying: ‘Beware of the scribes who like to walk around in long robes, and like respectful greetings in the market places, 39) and chief seats in the synagogues, and places of honor at banquets, 40) who devour widows' houses, and for appearance's sake offer long prayers; these will receive greater condemnation." 41) And He sat down opposite the treasury, and began observing how the multitude was putting money into the treasury; and many rich people were putting in large sums. 42) And a poor widow came and put in two small copper coins, which amount to a cent. 43) And calling His disciples to Him, He said to them, "Truly I say to you, this poor widow put in more than all the contributors to the treasury; for they all put in out of their surplus, but she, out of her poverty, put in all she owned, all she had to live on."

I read this and paused for a moment, and pictured this lady in my mind. I saw an older lady dressed in worn shabby clothes. Even in the text you can see she was poor. Now an older lady who was a widow in Jesus' day would not receive very much attention. In fact women in general were not given a lot of respect. So here is this poor lady dressed in rags coming up to put money in the temple treasury. She comes up quietly with her head down low and puts in a cent which really amounts to nothing. She is someone whom the compassionate would pity. As I visualized this in my mind, I felt as the Lord interrupted my thoughts to ask me a question. The question that my thoughts were interrupted with was this. "In the times that you have envied others or wished that you were in their shoes, have you wished you were like her?”

Before you read on, stop right here and ask yourself the same question. Seriously. Stop a minute and picture this poor widow in your mind and ask yourself this question. I did stop and pondered this question and I said, “No, I have never wished I was like her.” Then in my mind the Lord came across loud and clear. “Why not? She received my praise!”

Wow! I felt ashamed! By the world’s standards, we may appear as a failure. We may appear as someone of no significance, but the Lord views things a lot differently than the world does. This lady was at a state of disadvantage in the world's perspective. Yet Jesus used her as an object lesson for his disciples, whom He was trying to teach. Somehow I do not think that she is at any disadvantage now! I do not think the praise from Jesus ended there!

We are to give of ourselves not looking for recognition of those within the Church or anyone else. Consider the next passage and how it ties in with the one we just read.

Matthew 6:2-6: "2) When therefore you give alms, do not sound a trumpet before you, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may be honored by men. Truly I say to you, they have their reward in full. 3) But when you give alms, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing 4) that your alms may be in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will repay you. 5) And when you pray, you are not to be as the hypocrites; for they love to stand and pray in the synagogues and on the street corners, in order to be seen by men. Truly I say to you, they have their reward in full. 6) But you, when you pray, go into your inner room, and when you have shut your door, pray to your Father who is in secret, and your Father who sees in secret will repay you."

We are to approach our duty in a quiet humble manner, not looking for the recognition of any person or church leader. Our concern is to be obedient and pleasing to the Lord.

I would like to add one final illustration that I heard about our committing to the Lord and pleasing Him. This illustration I have found thought-provoking. Committing totally to the Lord is like being handed a legal contract which you know that you will be strictly bound to. This particular legal contract will be involved in every single area of your life. It is on a legal form with the law firm's name stated at the top. There is a line down at the bottom where the one bound to the contract is supposed to sign. The rest of the page is blank.

The Lord hands you the contract and asks if you wish to sign, stating as He hands it to you, "Do not worry about all of the details; I will fill in the rest later!" Do you really trust Him? Will you sign the contract and not worry? Will we be content being looked at by the world as a failure and a person of no significance? Whose praise are we seeking?

Table of Contents pg 1, 2, 3, 4

WHY READ THE OLD TESTAMENT?

I have met Christians who feel that we do not need the Old Testament. They want to refer everything to the New Testament and view the entire Old Testament as outdated. They may make some sort of statement such as that the Old Testament is the Law, and Christ fulfilled the law. We even publish lots of "New Testaments" by themselves, eliminating a big part of God's written Word.

How did Jesus view the Old Testament?

John 5:39: "You search the Scriptures, because you think that in them you have eternal life; and it is these that bear witness of Me." (NAS)

What Scriptures did they have when Jesus said this? All they had was the Old Testament — the New Testament had not been yet been written. Still, Jesus said the Old Testament bore witness of Him.

Luke 24:25-27: "And He said to them, 'O foolish men and slow of heart to believe in all that the prophets have spoken! Was it not necessary for the Christ to suffer these things and to enter into His glory?' And beginning with Moses and with all the prophets, He explained to them the things concerning Himself in all the Scriptures." (NAS)

Here we see Jesus starting with Moses and all the prophets to explain things concerning Himself. Since the Old Testament bears witness to Jesus, why would anyone want to eliminate it?

When the Apostle Paul and the disciples were out witnessing to people, they constantly referred to the Old Testament. Let me share a couple of examples of this.

Acts 8:30-35: "30) And when Philip had run up, he heard him reading Isaiah the prophet, and said, 'Do you understand what you are reading?' 31) And he said, 'Well, how could I, unless someone guides me?' And he invited Philip to come up and sit with him. 32) Now the passage of Scripture which he was reading was this: 'He was led as a sheep to slaughter; and as a lamb before its shearer is silent, so He does not open His mouth. 33) In humiliation His judgment was taken away; who shall relate His generation? For His life is removed from the earth.' 34) And the eunuch answered Philip and said, 'Please tell me of whom does the prophet say this? Of himself, or of someone else?' 35) And Philip opened his mouth, and beginning from this Scripture he preached Jesus to him." (NAS)

Table of Contents pg 1, 2, 3, 4

Acts 17:11: “Now these were more noble-minded than those in Thessalonica, for they received the word with great eagerness, examining the Scriptures daily, to see whether these things were so.”

These people were commended for accepting what the Apostle Paul said and searched the Scriptures daily to see if the message that Paul gave was true. Again the Scriptures they were checking daily were those found in the Old Testament. The New Testament wasn't finished yet.

2 Timothy 2:15: “Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.” (KJV)

This passage really states the need to study the Old Testament clearly. Think about this a minute. The New Testament was not complete at the writing of this passage. So it cannot only be talking about the New Testament.

God went to the trouble of making sure we had His written Word. There are 66 books in the Bible, and 39 of them are in the Old Testament. It makes no sense to say that as Christians, we no longer need it. Jesus and the Apostles made constant use of it, and so should we.

Table of Contents pg 1, 2, 3, 4

ARE YOU A SELF CENTERED PERSON?

The Bible teaches us that we should put others before ourselves.

Philippians 2:3-4: “Do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit, but with humility of mind let each of you regard one another as more important than himself; do not merely look out for your own personal interests, but also for the interests of others.”

I will never forget an illustration a guest speaker Gayle Erwin used when I was in Bible school. He was talking about things we got angry at. In Ephesians 4:26 we are told, "Be angry, and yet do not sin; do not let the sun go down on your anger.” There is a difference between righteous anger and unrighteous anger. Jesus was angry when He drove the people out of the temple (John 2:14-17) and yet He was without sin (Hebrews 4:15). The question is, why do we get upset in certain situations? Imagine that you are standing in a line and someone cuts in front of you. Does this upset you a little? You might say, “Yes, but what the other person did was wrong — which gives me the right to be upset.” Let me ask you this: have you ever been upset at someone who cut into line *behind* you? No? If not, then are you ever really angry when someone cuts into line in front of someone else — or just when someone cuts into line in front of *you*? Does this attitude reflect regarding others as more important than ourselves?

Table of Contents pg 1, 2, 3, 4

I WOULD LIKE TO MENTION A COMMON MISTAKE MADE BY NONBELIEVERS:

How many times have you had a conversation with someone who will quote the Bible or say that Jesus said something, only to find out later that they do not even believe the Bible?

A person may try to win a debate with you by using certain parts of the Bible. When you bring the passage back into context, or share related verses in the Bible, your opponent's response is along the lines of "I don't believe that part of the Bible."

I remember a conversation with a friend. She would claim that Jesus said something, and I would share other verses in the Bible on the same subject. Her comment would always be, "Well, I do not believe the Bible." Finally, every time she said that Jesus said something, I would ask her, "What makes you think Jesus said that?" Her answer was, "It's in the Bible". I then replied, "But you don't believe the Bible, so what makes you think Jesus said that?" This really confused her, and she kept repeating, "It's in the Bible!" Even when she was quoting something that w*as* in the Bible that Jesus *had* said, her reasoning (although sincere) was not logical. It makes no sense to quote the Bible as an authoritative source, and then turn around and deny the authority of the Bible. This is not sound reasoning!

The Mormons make a similar mistake in their Eighth Article of Faith: "We believe the Bible to be the word of God insofar as it is translated correctly. We also believe the Book of Mormon to be the word of God."

This sounds fairly reasonable at first glance. What if there are mistakes in the translation of the Bible? There is an abundance of evidence supporting the accuracy of the text of the Bible. There is also an abundance of evidence showing the unreliability of the Book of Mormon. These are subjects that I have dealt with in other writings. What I want to point out here is that this article of faith is often used as an excuse to reject the bible by the L.D.S members.

For example, I remember talking to a bishop of the L.D.S church. Our conversation was about God. They believe that God the Father has a body of flesh and bones. I pointed out that Jesus made both of the following statements.

Luke 24:39: "See My hands and My feet, that it is I Myself; touch Me and see, for a spirit does not have flesh and bones as you see that I have."

John 4:23-24: "But an hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers shall worship the Father in spirit and truth; for such people the Father seeks to be His worshipers. God is spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth"

Table of Contents pg 1, 2, 3, 4

Jesus said that the Father was spirit and He also said that a spirit did not have a body of flesh and bones. Therefore I do not believe that God the Father has a body of flesh and bones.

The bishop's response was that the Bible was wrong! He then referred to the Mormons' *Eighth Article of Faith*.

This of course really boils down to one question: either the Bible is what it claims to be, and it is reliable — or, the Bible is not what it claims to be, and it is not reliable.

If one does not believe the text of the Bible is reliable, on what basis do they believe certain parts? How can we logically say, "This part is true and that part is not true", without some sort of factual reason to support that position? I suggest to you that most people who discount the Bible do so with absolutely no evidence.

I certainly cannot prove every point or event mentioned in the Bible. However, I have proven enough for myself to accept the parts I cannot prove. I have yet to see an argument against the Bible that is not full of holes and gaps. Christians accept some things by faith, but it is not at all a blind faith. There is enough evidence for me that I cannot rationally throw logic out the window to deny the parts I do understand. I am reminded of something I once heard: "I am not bothered so much by things that I do not understand in the Bible as I am by things that I do understand." The truth of Scripture is sobering enough in what I can prove and what I do understand!

As far as the accuracy of the Bible, besides the abundance of archaeological evidence, manuscript evidence, and fulfilled prophecy, one should also ask themselves some basic questions. Is God Sovereign or not? Does God really have control? Can He actually preserve His written word? Or is He at the mercy of mankind to do that for Him? Would God consider it important enough to want to preserve His written word?

Jesus claimed to be from heaven. Jesus predicted His own death and resurrection. He offered us evidence of who He really was by actually rising from the dead. How reliable did Jesus consider the Scripture that existed during His earthly life? Considering that the Dead Sea Scrolls date to before Jesus, and they confirm the accuracy of the current Bible, this can be an important question.

Matthew 5:17-18: "Do not think that I came to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I did not come to abolish, but to fulfill. For truly I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, not the smallest letter or stroke shall pass away from the Law, until all is accomplished.

Table of Contents pg 1, 2, 3, 4

It would seem by this statement that Jesus considered the text of Scripture reliable and authoritative. Since Jesus considered the text reliable and the Dead Sea Scrolls confirm the accuracy of the Hebrew text we have today, why would we reject it? This leads us back to the other question, “Is God sovereign?” Is He capable of preserving His written word or is He really at the mercy of mankind to do that for Him? I believe the answer is that God is sovereign, and He has preserved His written word to lead mankind to Himself.

Jeremiah 32:27: "Behold, I am the LORD, the God of all flesh; is anything too difficult for Me?"

Isaiah 40:8: “The grass withers, the flower fades, but the word of our God stands forever.”

Isaiah 46:9-10: "Remember the former things long past, for I am God, and there is no other; I am God, and there is no one like me, Declaring the end from the beginning and from ancient times things which have not been done, saying, 'My purpose will be established, and I will accomplish all My good pleasure'...”

Matthew 16:18: "And I also say to you that you are Peter, and upon this rock I will build My church; and the gates of Hades shall not overpower it.”

Table of Contents pg 1, 2, 3, 4

TRUTH

I remember being in a college dorm and seeing a statement that a student placed on the door to his room. It read, "Truth is what you believe". Think about that statement a minute. Is it true? A couple of days later another note was stuck on his door underneath the original statement. It read, "Truth is what you believe? Well you must be an idiot. I believe that, therefore it must be true!" I am amused sometimes by the blindness of some people's “statements of belief”; their “creeds”; their “words to live by”.

If the student who originally wrote "Truth is what you believe" was correct, then he must have been an "A" student. After all, how could he ever get anything wrong on a test? He obviously believed his answer was true! Since he believed it, how could he be wrong? Funny enough there are professors who also believe this philosophy and still maintain a double standard by not giving all of their students a passing grade.

In our world today it is amazing how many people do not believe in any absolute truth. The reasoning given for this general attitude of disbelief is that many things that once were accepted as true have been proven incorrect in the past. For example, people once believed the world was flat. Also, in the area of medicine, so called "facts" seem to evolve with research and advancement in technology. Something that may seem true now may later, after more research, be shown to be incorrect, or incomplete knowledge (flawed).

Some people apply this theory across the board, and say that there is no absolute truth at all, in anything. While it is true that people have believed things that were later proven to be untrue, this does not mean that there is no absolute truth. This doubting attitude is not really a new concept that developed only in our century. Pilate asked Jesus the same question.

John 18:37-38:

"Pilate therefore said to Him, 'So You are a king?' Jesus answered, 'You say correctly that I am a king. For this I have been born, and for this I have come into the world, to bear witness to the truth. Everyone who is of the truth hears My voice.' Pilate said to Him, 'What is truth?' And when he had said this, he went out again to the Jews, and said to them, 'I find no guilt in Him.'"

There are indeed certain things that remain true regardless of whether or not an individual chooses to believe in that truth. "2 + 2 = 4" even if one chooses not to believe it. If you decide that you do not believe in gravity and step out of an airplane at 3,000 feet without a parachute or similar device, the outcome will be fatal.

When it comes to religion, some people make popular (but not very well considered) remarks. For example, **"you must keep an open mind"** is popular, as is, **"that may be true for you, but it is not true for me."** Keeping an open mind is indeed good advice — but ignoring all evidence in any situation is naive. It is best to make sure that your mind isn't so open your brains fall out. Usually when someone has told me that I must "keep an open mind", I find that the person talking knows very few, if any, of the facts — and is reluctant to acknowledge that I may, in fact, be right. There are truths that are so well-established in fact that I do not need to "be open to the possibility of them being wrong."

People have fallen from very great heights and lived. Yet if someone tells me to jump off a cliff, telling me I will be all right, I am not going to do it. When I am advised to keep an open mind about the probability of my resulting death, I am still not going to jump. Why would I be so closed-minded about such a thing? Because I have some knowledge of the facts, and I know that to jump would be foolish. This may seem an extreme example, but to my mind, some of the things that people say we should "keep an open mind" about really are that ridiculous.

As for the phrase, "that may be true for you, but it is not for me" — picture yourself in a courtroom on trial. The prosecutor alleges that you were caught stealing something, and theft is against the law. Your defense is, "Well, that might be true for you, but that is not true for me." Do you think the judge or jury will accept that explanation? We do not live in different worlds from each other; we all live on this earth. What has been proven true is true, plain and simple.

You can believe something that is not true, and you have that right. But truth is still truth, in spite of what we believe. Sometimes there are consequences for believing that which is not true. You can step off a high mountain cliff because there are soft-looking clouds just a little below and you believe they will make a nice soft landing. But you will probably suffer some consequences for your false belief. Or am I just being closed-minded about the whole thing again?

The disciples of Jesus saw Him crucified. Three days after the crucifixion, the disciples claimed they saw Jesus alive again. There were more than 500 eyewitnesses who claimed they also saw Jesus alive after the crucifixion. Included among these eyewitnesses were people who were formerly unbelievers. After the crucifixion Jesus appeared to people and talked with them. Jesus ate food with them. They touched Jesus. This behavior continued for a period of forty days. The original disciples and numerous others suffered persecution and death for continuing to tell people what they had seen. Being closed-minded about the whole thing they were put to death! I exaggerate to prove my point — that there is no other apparent motive for them to stick to this testimony other than that they believed the resurrection of Jesus to be true. These things took place in the same geographical area and during the same time frame as Jesus' crucifixion, death, and burial. Those are the facts of events that occurred over 2,000 years ago. The resurrection of Jesus can be confirmed as a historical fact outside of the use of the Bible.

The discussion so far has led to one absolute truth that I would like to focus on for a moment — for to refuse to accept this truth would be an error more fatal than stepping out of an airplane without a parachute. What could be more fatal than death? An eternity spent in a place called "Hell" would certainly be far worse than death itself, or any form of suffering here on earth, if indeed such a place really exists. We base the idea or reality of "Hell" on the fact that the Bible is indeed the word of God. I stand with those who declare, "God said it, and therefore I believe it!" Many people question whether the Bible is the Word of God or if it is truly accurate.

There is an abundance of evidence giving validity to claims of the Bible being the written Word of God. I am speaking of all of the archaeological evidence that the Bible is historically accurate. Numerous fulfilled prophecies show the Bible's supernatural ability to constantly accurately foretell the future. Couple this with the fact that there is also plenty of historical evidence showing that Jesus actually did bodily raise from the dead, and I remain convinced that the Bible is indeed the Word of God.

Considering the Bible's accuracy, I would refer to the manuscript evidence and also ask, "Is God sovereign or not?" He declared that He would preserve His word in the Old Testament (Isaiah 40:8), and Jesus made a similar statement in the New Testament (Matthew 24: 35). If God can create the world, then certainly He is capable of preserving His written word.

This is the realm where eternal truth is found. These truths are far more significant than the fact that 2 + 2 = 4, or that there is such a thing as gravity. Since God does not change (Malachi 3:6) this is an absolute truth that will not change. The Bible itself makes claims that if its words are true, ignoring them will be a fatal mistake. God will judge the world and He will judge both the living and the dead. A righteous judge is not going to excuse a behavior based upon a philosophy like "it was only true for him, but not for me" We either have broken God's law or we have not. When the Bible tells us that God will judge the world it is either the truth or it is not. The evidence indicates that the bible is true!

Table of Contents pg 1, 2, 3, 4

Consider the following passages in the Bible concerning truth.

Psalm 119:142: "Thy righteousness is an everlasting righteousness, and Thy law is truth."

John 1:14: "And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth."

John 1:17: "For the Law was given through Moses; grace and truth were realized through Jesus Christ."

John 8:31-32: "Jesus therefore was saying to those Jews who had believed Him, 'If you abide in My word, then you are truly disciples of Mine; and you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.'"

John 8:45-47: "But because I speak the truth, you do not believe Me. Which one of you convicts Me of sin? If I speak truth, why do you not believe Me? He who is of God hears the words of God; for this reason you do not hear them, because you are not of God."

John 14:6: "Jesus said to him, 'I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father, but through Me.'"

John 14:17: "that is the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it does not behold Him or know Him, but you know Him because He abides with you, and will be in you.

John 17:17: "Sanctify them in the truth; Thy word is truth."

Romans 1:18: "For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who suppress the truth in unrighteousness."

Romans 2:7-8: "to those who by perseverance in doing good seek for glory and honor and immortality, eternal life; but to those who are selfishly ambitious and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, wrath and indignation."

Galatians 2:5: "But we did not yield in subjection to them for even an hour, so that the truth of the gospel might remain with you."

Ephesians 1:13: "In Him, you also, after listening to the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation — having also believed, you were sealed in Him with the Holy Spirit of promise."

John 1:8: "If we say that we have no sin, we are deceiving ourselves, and the truth is not in us."

You have just read that God's Word is truth. The Gospel is truth. No one comes to God the Father except through Jesus Christ. The wrath of God is revealed against men who suppress the truth. If we say we have no sin then the truth is not in us.

This means that there are not a lot of ways to heaven, folks —Jesus claimed to be the only way. Jesus spoke of Hell more than anybody else did. He claimed to be from Heaven. He was foretold in detail before He was even born. He came here and amazed people with His miracles. He predicted His own death and resurrection.
Historical evidence leads us to the conclusion that He actually rose from the dead.

Yes there is absolute truth. 2 + 2 = 4, and it will always remain so. There is such a thing as gravity. Eternal truth is found in Jesus Christ. He still maintains more validity than any religious leader in history. Ignoring His claims will prove to be fatal. You would not step out of a plane at 3,000 feet without a parachute. So why would a person not at least consider the facts concerning Jesus and his claims? If Jesus was telling the truth, then those who accept Him and His payment for their sins can spend eternity in a place called Heaven, where there are no more tears or pain. To reject His offer is to choose to stand before God with no payment for sin. One can choose to do this, but it is not a wise decision, and the outcome will be more fatal than death itself.

Truth is not just what we believe. Hopefully we will believe, earnestly seek and obey the truth. However if we do none of these things, truth will remain true and just, in spite of our rebellion.

John 3:16-19: "For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish, but have eternal life. For God did not send the Son into the world to judge the world, but that the world should be saved through Him. He who believes in Him is not judged; he who does not believe has been judged already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God. And this is the judgment, that the light is come into the world, and men loved the darkness rather than the light; for their deeds were evil.

John 14:6: "Jesus said to him, 'I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father, but through Me.'"

Time Magazine December 30, 1974: "After more than two centuries of facing the heaviest scientific guns that could be brought to bear, the Bible has survived and perhaps better for the siege even on the critics' own terms. Historical fact, the scriptures seem more acceptable now than they did when the rationalists began the attack" [B1]

Table of Contents pg 1, 2, 3, 4

IF THAT'S CHRISTIANITY, I WANT NO PART OF IT!

I often hear this remark — “If that’s Christianity, I want no part of it!” — When someone who professes to be a Christian falls into sin. Hypocrisy has always been an excuse, a stumbling block, for those who do not fully understand Christianity, as to why they do not choose to live a Christian life. Sometimes, people have referred to the life choices of certain public figures as to why they do not embrace Christ. There have been several times, while I was sharing the Gospel with someone, when suddenly the other person would change the subject and say, "What about so and so?" Or how about this person, or that person?

People's failures have no bearing on whether the Gospel message is true or not. There are true Christians who have fallen into sin. A true Christian will not continue in sin (1 John 3:9-10). There are also people who claim to be Christians who are not Christians at all. Going to church and calling yourself a Christian does not make you a Christian, any more than sitting in a garage and calling yourself a car does not make you a car. The truth of Christianity itself is not based upon any of us; the truth of Christianity is based on Jesus Christ, who has never sinned and is not a hypocrite.

If you were drowning and someone threw you a life preserver, how would you react? Would you say to yourself, the person who threw this to me is a jerk, so I will not use this life preserver? Or would you say to yourself, what about that guy drowning way over there? Does he have a life preserver also? If not, I will just let this one float here while I drown. It is just as ridiculous to reject Jesus Christ because of some other person. Jesus Christ deserves your attention. He lived a sinless life and died on a cross to pay the penalty of your sin. He also rose from the dead and ultimately will be your judge (John 5:22). You will be judged on your decisions regarding Jesus and His substitutional sacrifice. What will it be? Will you accept Him, or reject Him? If you deny Him, He also will deny you (Matthew 10:32-33).

Table of Contents pg 1, 2, 3, 4

Is God fair? Or do we even have the right to judge? Because there is so much bad stuff in the world many people do not even believe God exist. Then they question if he does exist is he really fair? Well this is a question I have asked myself and here is my answer.

You can click on **"God is on trial by mankind"** to start reading at the beginning of this topic or use the page index to jump to the part that interest you most.

Overview of content in this section is as follows:

Topic Index
God is on trial my mankind. (pg. 268)

Man judging God? (pg. 268)
I Never Promised You a Rose Garden (pg. 269)
Could it be that after this life everything is totally compensated? (pg. 270)
God allows bad things to happen to anybody (pg. 272)
Is there Purpose in Suffering? (pg. 274)
The Lord has a strange way of looking at things (pg. 276)

Table of Contents pg 1, 2, 3, 4

GOD IS ON TRIAL BY MANKIND!

It sounds kind of strange when put this way. Yet it is a reality. Of course mankind judging God is a hopeless situation at best. Even if someone does decide God is in the wrong, what can he possibly do about it? It kind of reminds me of a poster I used to have. It read as follows. ***"There are two foundational factors to human enlightenment. (1) There is a God. (2) You are not him."*** The bottom line is, even if you wrongly decide God is not fair, the fact remains He is still God and you are not. Yet mankind constantly has questioned, "Why does God allow evil in the world? If He truly loves us, certainly He would not allow such awful things to happen to the innocent." As God does allow this, people often further question, "Who is God that He should judge us? Is that fair?"

Ultimately people judge God by declaring that He is not good and He is not fair. Ironically, the ones judging Him are not nearly as good or fair as He is. God loves us so much that He himself suffered and died on a cross so we could eventually be with Him in a place where there are no more tears or pain (John 3:16, Acts 20:28, Revelation 21:4).

God literally was put on trial a few thousand years ago, and the people wanted to crucify the very one who was actually responsible for many miracles. Jesus healed people and taught about love and still He was put to death. Talk about injustice! Jesus was without sin and He was subjected to a sham of a trial, mocked, beaten, and tortured! Yet God does not give any of us what we deserve; if he did we would ALL be in Hell right now. Anytime that a person spends outside of Hell is an example of the pure grace of God. What makes us think that God owes us anything?

The person, who is suffering the loss of a dear one, or the long-term effects of some harsh physical or emotional trauma, finds no satisfactory pat answer that will bring comfort. I think people in those situations need a hug much more than they need a lesson in theology! They don't necessarily really want an answer, even when they ask for one. Rather what they are often seeking is comfort, or an undoing of the wrong they believe has been done.

I remember being angry at God when my mom died. I felt as though He should have made her live long enough for her to accept Him. I was standing on a fallen tree yelling at God. The irony of it all is that several months before this, I prayed for this tree to fall over because I needed a bridge. I had previously asked my landlord if I could cut it down to cross the creek to my home. I was told "No", and that perhaps I should go home and pray about it. I did pray and the tree came up by the roots fell across the creek right where I needed it and it did not break in the middle! As I was standing on this tree yelling at God, these words came to me, so loudly and clearly. It couldn't have been made clearer even if the words were actually audible: **"Even if she did reject me, is that reason for you to?"** This ended my little tantrum!

Table of Contents pg 1, 2, 3, 4

Topic Index

I am reminded of ***I Never Promised You a Rose Garden***, a song written by Joe South and made famous by country singer Lynn Anderson. At times, the rose garden is nothing but thorns and weeds. All the roses seem to be dead and it has been bitter cold and gray with no hope of sunshine. The seasons come and go with no change for the better. It seems that as soon as we start to get back on top of things life slams us to the ground, kicks us in the teeth and laughs. It does not seem to matter that we are pursuing the Lord the best we can. We may try to comfort ourselves, reminding ourselves that Job suffered trials, and Jesus Himself was crucified. But when we compare ourselves to any person in the Bible, we find ourselves lacking. We judge ourselves and despair. "God disciplines those whom he loves" (Hebrews 12: 6); perhaps we deserve this? Or, "Consider it all joy when you enter various trials" (James 1:2) because it "produces endurance". These are not real comforting words when you are drowning in the sea of hopelessness. Sure, you can focus on the fact that there are those who are even worse off than you, but what comfort is that? Are we to find comfort in the fact that some seems to suffer more than we? That seems cruel. Rather we pity them as well whom we cannot help because we are not even capable of helping ourselves.

God has not promised us a life with no pain. In fact we are promised a life of hardship (Job 5:6-8, John 15:19 and 16:33, 2 Timothy 3:12, Acts 14:22). The very first person murdered in human history was Abel and he was the righteous one with whom the Lord was pleased! The followers of Jesus — namely his disciples — all died martyrs for their faith with the exception of John, who was exiled to the Island of Patmos. Paul, even before he was beheaded, did not lead an easy life and he served God to the best of his ability.

2 Corinthians 11:23-28: "Are they servants of Christ? (I speak as if insane) I more so; in far more labors, in far more imprisonments, beaten times without number, often in danger of death. Five times I received from the Jews thirty-nine lashes. Three times I was beaten with rods, once I was stoned, three times I was shipwrecked, a night and a day I have spent in the deep. I have been on frequent journeys, in dangers from rivers, dangers from robbers, dangers from my countrymen, dangers from the Gentiles, dangers in the city, dangers in the wilderness, dangers on the sea, dangers among false brethren; I have been in labor and hardship, through many sleepless nights, in hunger and thirst, often without food, in cold and exposure. Apart from such external things, there is the daily pressure upon me of concern for all the churches."

Most of us cannot say that we suffered nearly as much as the Apostle Paul, nor can we say we served the Lord as diligently. So where is the fairness in that? How could Paul maintain an attitude of praise? Was he stupid, crazy, or what?

I believe that men of God in the Bible, who suffered much and still maintained an attitude of praise and worship for the Lord, did so because they had insight to the nature of God and the final outcome. God seems to have an amazingly different perspective on things than the majority of mankind.

Table of Contents pg 1, 2, 3, 4

Topic Index

Many things in this life do not seem fair. We may question why God allows some to have incredible amounts of blessings while it seems that every step of others is cursed. **Could it be that after this life everything is totally compensated?** The Bible does tell us of heavenly rewards. Could it be that these eternal rewards can compensate for the awful sufferings in this world? Can the retarded in this life to come be more blessed than the gifted intellectual? Can the poor and destitute be more blessed than the rich? Are the disadvantages that we have in this life compensated in the life to come? How surprised will we really be by the way that God rewards some more than others in heaven? Yes, the rewards will vary in heaven. (Corinthians 3:10-15).

The punishments in Hell vary as well. How else could some receive a greater damnation or condemnation than others? (Matthew 23: 14, Mark 12: 40, Luke 20: 47)

Let's take a short walk through some Scripture to find some answers. First we will look at the short-sightedness of our questioning God in the first place. Then we will move onto an explanation of why we have to deal with evil. Then finally and most importantly, we'll see God's radically different way of looking at things.

Isaiah 64:8: "But now, O LORD, Thou art our Father, we are the clay, and Thou our potter; and all of us are the work of Thy hand."

Jeremiah 18:1-10: "The word which came to Jeremiah from the LORD saying, 'Arise and go down to the potter's house, and there I shall announce My words to you.' Then I went down to the potter's house, and there he was, making something on the wheel. But the vessel that he was making of clay was spoiled in the hand of the potter; so he remade it into another vessel, as it pleased the potter to make. Then the word of the LORD came to me saying, 'Can I not, O house of Israel, deal with you as this potter does' declares the LORD. 'Behold, like the clay in the potter's hand, so are you in My hand, O house of Israel. At one moment I might speak concerning a nation or concerning a kingdom to uproot, to pull down, or to destroy it; if that nation against which I have spoken turns from its evil, I will relent concerning the calamity I planned to bring on it. Or at another moment I might speak concerning a nation or concerning a kingdom to build up or to plant it; if it does evil in My sight by not obeying My voice, then I will think better of the good with which I had promised to bless it.''

Table of Contents pg 1, 2, 3, 4

Romans 9:14-24: "What shall we say then? There is no injustice with God, is there? May it never be! For He says to Moses, 'I will have mercy on whom I have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I have compassion.' So then it does not depend on the man who wills or the man who runs, but on God who has mercy. For the Scripture says to Pharaoh, 'For this very purpose I raised you up, to demonstrate My power in you, and that My name might be proclaimed throughout the whole earth.' So then He has mercy on whom He desires, and He hardens whom He desires. You will say to me then, 'Why does He still find fault? For who resists His will?' **On the contrary, who are you, O man, who answers back to God? The thing molded will not say to the molder, 'Why did you make me like this,' will it?** Or does not the potter have a right over the clay, to make from the same lump one vessel for honorable use, and another for common use? What if God, although willing to demonstrate His wrath and to make His power known, endured with much patience vessels of wrath prepared for destruction? And He did so in order that He might make known the riches of His glory upon vessels of mercy, which He prepared beforehand for glory, even us, whom He also called, not from among Jews only, but also from among Gentiles."

As originally stated there are two facts here. (1) There is a God; (2) We are not Him! Who are we to argue with God? He made us, and He has the right to do with us whatever He wishes. Even if you disagree with His decision, there is absolutely nothing that you can do about it. He possesses all power and we do not!

Mankind may want to judge God, but the reality of it all is the opposite. God will indeed judge all of mankind. All of us are guilty by His standard and deserving of death. Yet this loving God who demands complete justice also provided a way out for all who want it under His terms.

Romans 3:23-24: "for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, being justified as a gift by His grace through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus..."

Romans 6:23: "For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord."

Ezekiel 33:11: "Say to them, 'As I live!' declares the Lord GOD, 'I take no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but rather that the wicked turn from his way and live. Turn back, turn back from your evil ways! Why then will you die, O house of Israel?'"

Here we see that God will indeed judge, because he is a God of justice. Still He pleads with them to turn, so that He is not forced to do so!

Table of Contents pg 1, 2, 3, 4

John 3:16-21: "For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish, but have eternal life. For God did not send the Son into the world to judge the world, but that the world should be saved through Him. He who believes in Him is not judged; he who does not believe has been judged already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God. And this is the judgment, that the light is come into the world, and men loved the darkness rather than the light; for their deeds were evil. For everyone who does evil hates the light, and does not come to the light, lest his deeds should be exposed. But he who practices the truth comes to the light, that his deeds may be manifested as having been wrought in God."

Revelation 20:11-15: "And I saw a great white throne and Him who sat upon it, from whose presence earth and heaven fled away, and no place was found for them. And I saw the dead, the great and the small, standing before the throne, and books were opened; and another book was opened, which is the book of life; and the dead were judged from the things which were written in the books, according to their deeds. And the sea gave up the dead which were in it, and death and Hades gave up the dead which were in them; and they were judged, every one of them according to their deeds. And death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. This is the second death, the lake of fire. And if anyone's name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire."

Scripture declares that God will indeed judge, yet He provided a way of escape for us through Christ Jesus. Obviously we are not in a position to judge God, nor to do anything about it if we do.

Topic Index

Still some would question why God, although so powerful, does nothing about all of the injustice. Why would he allow a small to child to be brutally raped and murdered? We cannot argue that God does not allow such awful things because looking around we see that He has allowed it. ***However, delayed justice is still justice.*** Eternity in Hell is far worse than anything that we could inflict on the condemned. As mentioned earlier there are varying degrees of punishment in Hell.

The problem exists in the first place because God gave us a free will. Mankind has always chosen to sin. We act in a manner contrary to our creator's loving guidance: we rebel just because we can! When we rebel against God, there are always consequences. You can be forgiven, yes, but that does not mean you have escaped all consequences.

We can choose to steal and then later ask forgiveness. We may even receive forgiveness not only from the Lord, but from the person from whom we stole. You can still be prosecuted and spend time in jail; in some circumstances, even if the person that you wronged declines to pursue a course of action. The State can still prosecute you because the law was broken.

The ramifications of our sin go far beyond this. Mankind's choices have affected all of creation (Romans 8:19-22). The death of plants and animals, sickness, and disease are all part of the ramifications of the sin of mankind. Still in our warped way of thinking we blame God because there are consequences for rebelling against His loving kindness and infinite wisdom. Consider the child who runs away from a loving home when he does not get his way, only to find hunger, cold, and despair is what he ran to. Should he blame the parents that he is now cold, hungry and desperate?

Which of us can say that we have not added to the problem by rebelling against God in some way or another? Which of us can say we have never wronged another person? Should the line of judgment from God only be drawn where we have not been as bad as another? Would God be correctly dealing out justice by turning a blind eye to our sin and not another's? Let there be no mistake — no sin will go without answering to perfect justice. The only way any of us can survive is through God's grace and mercy provided through Jesus Christ. As long as we live on this earth we will see sin and the consequences of it, because mankind has a free will and with it constantly makes wrong choices. We are extremely fortunate that God is willing to delay His judgment so that we have the time to repent and turn to Him for forgiveness!

He is a loving God, and therefore He does not force Himself on us. He allows us to reject Him even though He knows it is a poor choice. We ourselves experience love from others and we cannot force that love. Why should we expect that God would be pleased with a bunch of robots that loved Him only because they had no choice in the matter? It would be wrong for us to try to force someone to love us. It would be equally as wrong if God forced us to love Him. We love Him because He first loved us (1 John .4:19)

Some have mistakenly misquoted Scripture, saying God is guilty of allowing us to go through hardships that are more than we can bear. They point to the one who committed suicide saying there was obviously more than that person could bear. That is a misuse of what that particular passage really says:

1 Corinthians 10:12-14: “Therefore let him who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall. No temptation has overtaken you but such as is common to man; and God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will provide the way of escape also, that you may be able to endure it. Therefore, my beloved, flee from idolatry.”

This passage is saying that God will not allow "temptation" so great that you cannot handle it, without also providing a way to escape the temptation to sin. It is not God's fault that we choose to sin rather than fleeing from it. God did not promise that we would never encounter some extreme difficulties in our life — but Scripture does show that He will be there to help us through them.

Table of Contents pg 1, 2, 3, 4

Topic Index

THERE IS SOMETIMES PURPOSE IN SUFFERING THAT IS GOOD

2 Corinthians 7:10: "For the sorrow that is according to the will of God produces a repentance without regret, leading to salvation; but the sorrow of the world produces death."

This godly sorrow resulted in salvation. Often you hear testimonies from people who are broken and finally turning to the Lord. Thus, they are gaining salvation and an eternity in the future with no more tears or pain.

2 Corinthians 1:8-10: "For we do not want you to be unaware, brethren, of our affliction which came to us in Asia, that we were burdened excessively, beyond our strength, so that we despaired even of life; indeed, we had the sentence of death within ourselves in order that we should not trust in ourselves, but in God who raises the dead; who delivered us from so great a peril of death, and will deliver us, He on whom we have set our hope. And He will yet deliver us."

This despair caused them to no longer trust in their own strength, but rather to trust in God instead. By trusting in Him instead of our own strength we are far better off.

James 1:2-4: "Consider it all joy, my brethren, when you encounter various trials, knowing that the testing of your faith produces endurance. And let endurance have its perfect result, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing."

Here we are told trials produce endurance, making us more complete. Remember the old phrase often used to encourage us to exercise: "No pain, No gain!" Well, this phrase seems applicable spiritually as well.

2 Corinthians 1:3-4: "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort; who comforts us in all our affliction so that we may be able to comfort those who are in any affliction with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God."

Here we are told what we deep-down already know: We can be of more comfort to others who are suffering if they know we really understand because we have gone through the same thing.

Romans 8:28: "And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose."

I mentioned earlier that people like Paul could have easily said that life had dealt them a bad hand. Yet in spite of all of the suffering and injustice that was dealt them, they maintained an attitude of praise and worship. Why? I believe it is because they had real insight to the nature of God and the final outcome of things in eternity.

God takes a radically different view of things than most of mankind. It is in this view that I believe we can find peace and comfort during our hardships. It is beyond our own strength and the perspective is on eternal things instead of the storm around us. Much like when Peter walked on water; he was fine until he focused on the storm instead of the Lord. The moment he took his eyes off the Lord and focused on the storm, he sank (Matthew 14:24-33),

Remember all of the bad things that happened to the Apostle Paul that we previously read about in 2 Corinthians 11:23-28? Consider what this same man said in the following passages.

Romans 8:16-18: "The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, heirs also, heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him in order that we may also be glorified with Him. For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that is to be revealed to us."

2 Corinthians 4:16-17: "Therefore we do not lose heart, but though our outer man is decaying, yet our inner man is being renewed day by day. For momentary, light affliction is producing for us an eternal weight of glory far beyond all comparison**."**

Philippians 3:8: "More than that, I count all things to be loss in view of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them but rubbish in order that I may gain Christ."

Wait a minute, Paul; they threw rocks at you until they thought you were dead! They beat you several times with a whip! They made you a prisoner for speaking the truth. You were shipwrecked more than once. One of these times you spent twenty-four hours floating in the sea. Another time you were shipwrecked and you got out gathering wood to help warm the survivors, only to be bitten by a poisonous snake. You call that "momentary light affliction" that has no comparison to what awaits in glory? You compare your losses in your former prestigious position in Judaism as nothing but garbage in comparison?

WOW!!! What kind of insight must this man have concerning God and Heaven to make such a radical statement as this!! What would cause this former non-believer and persecutor of the church to feel this way? Consider what Paul said in the following letters:

Galatians 1:11-13: "For I would have you know, brethren, that the gospel which was preached by me is not according to man. For I neither received it from man, nor was I taught it, but I received it through a revelation of Jesus Christ. For you have heard of my former manner of life in Judaism, how I used to persecute the church of God beyond measure, and tried to destroy it."

Table of Contents pg 1, 2, 3, 4

2 Corinthians 12:2-10: "I know a man in Christ who fourteen years ago — whether in the body I do not know, or out of the body I do not know, God knows — such a man was caught up to the third heaven. And I know how such a man — whether in the body or apart from the body I do not know, God knows — was caught up into Paradise, and heard inexpressible words, which a man is not permitted to speak. On behalf of such a man will I boast; but on my own behalf I will not boast, except in regard to my weaknesses. For if I do wish to boast I shall not be foolish, for I shall be speaking the truth; but I refrain from this, so that no one may credit me with more than he sees in me or hears from me. And because of the **surpassing greatness of the revelations**, for this reason, to keep me from exalting myself, there was given me a thorn in the flesh, a messenger of Satan to buffet me-- to keep me from exalting myself! Concerning this I entreated the Lord three times that it might depart from me. And He has said to me, 'My grace is sufficient for you, for power is perfected in weakness.' Most gladly, therefore, I will rather boast about my weaknesses, that the power of Christ may dwell in me. Therefore I am well content with weaknesses, with insults, with distresses, with persecutions, with difficulties, for Christ's sake; for when I am weak, then I am strong."

Paul definitely had some insight that most do not. He was not taught by man, but received revelations from the Lord himself. He actually got to see for himself what people only wonder about. This same man suffered far more than most of us ever will in our entire lives. His view of it all is that there is no comparison to losses, suffering, and injustices here on earth when viewed what waits in the life to come!!!

I don't know about you, but I find great comfort in that! Now, that is a solid reason to maintain hope in spite of the storm!

Topic Index

THE LORD HAS A STRANGE WAY OF LOOKING AT THINGS!

Mark 12:41-44: "And He sat down opposite the treasury, and began observing how the multitude were putting money into the treasury; and many rich people were putting in large sums. And a poor widow came and put in two small copper coins, which amount to a cent. And calling His disciples to Him, He said to them, 'Truly I say to you, this poor widow put in more than all the contributors to the treasury; for they all put in out of their surplus, but she, out of her poverty, put in all she owned, all she had to live on.'"

Try to place yourself there at the scene. We get impressed with large sums of money — observing someone give such a small amount as the woman did, we might think, "Why bother? Such a small amount won't help." Yet her gift excited Jesus so much that He called His disciples over to take notice, and gave her great praise. What great giving!

We who at the judgment day would like to hear the Lord say, "Well done my good and faithful servant" would do well to remember that the Lord weighs things quite differently than the world around us. If the Lord gave this widow great praise over the religious leaders and the wealthy that were there at the time, don't you think He will be consistent and give her great praise and reward in Heaven? In their time it would seem that this poor widow was at a great disadvantage. I suspect she is not at any disadvantage now! The hand we are dealt with here has no bearing on our ability to be rewarded in heaven.

God discerns the thoughts and intentions of the heart (Hebrews 4:12)!

Matthew 26:7-13: "a woman came to Him with an alabaster vial of very costly perfume, and she poured it upon His head as He reclined at the table. But the disciples were indignant when they saw this, and said, 'Why this waste? For this perfume might have been sold for a high price and the money given to the poor.' But Jesus, aware of this, said to them, 'Why do you bother the woman? For she has done a good deed to Me. For the poor you have with you always; but you do not always have Me. For when she poured this perfume upon My body, she did it to prepare Me for burial. Truly I say to you, wherever this gospel is preached in the whole world, what this woman has done shall also be spoken of in memory of her.'"

In this scene we see that the disciples are upset. What a waste of money! Yet the Lord praised her for the motive of her heart!

Luke 6:35: "But love your enemies, and do good, and lend, expecting nothing in return; and your reward will be great, and you will be sons of the Most High; for He Himself is kind to ungrateful and evil men."

Love your enemies? Lend and expect nothing in return? That will go over well in our culture and our business world. Still the Lord tells us our reward for this will be great!

Matthew 10:41-42: "He who receives a prophet in the name of a prophet shall receive a prophet's reward; and he who receives a righteous man in the name of a righteous man shall receive a righteous man's reward. And whoever in the name of a disciple gives to one of these little ones even a cup of cold water to drink, truly I say to you he shall not lose his reward."

Giving a child a cup of cold water might seem pretty insignificant by our standards. Yet Jesus says such an act will not go without reward! Yet remember He was not impressed with those who were giving great sums of money in the verse mentioned earlier.

Tell me if this next passage does not sound exactly the opposite of what the world will tell you"

Table of Contents pg 1, 2, 3, 4

Luke 6:20-26: "And turning His gaze on His disciples, He began to say, 'Blessed are you who are poor, for yours is the kingdom of God. Blessed are you who hunger now, for you shall be satisfied. Blessed are you who weep now, for you shall laugh .Blessed are you when men hate you, and ostracize you, and cast insults at you, and spurn your name as evil, for the sake of the Son of Man. Be glad in that day, and leap for joy, for behold, your reward is great in heaven; for in the same way their fathers used to treat the prophets. But woe to you who are rich, for you are receiving your comfort in full. Woe to you who are well-fed now, for you shall be hungry. Woe to you who laugh now, for you shall mourn and weep. Woe to you when all men speak well of you, for in the same way their fathers used to treat the false prophets.

Hebrews 10:32-36: "But remember the former days, when, after being enlightened, you endured a great conflict of sufferings, partly, by being made a public spectacle through reproaches and tribulations, and partly by becoming sharers with those who were so treated. For you showed sympathy to the prisoners, and accepted joyfully the seizure of your property, knowing that you have for yourselves a better possession and an abiding one. Therefore, do not throw away your confidence, which has a great reward."

This passage hardly sounds fair. They experienced conflict and suffering — yet they showed sympathy to prisoners. Next their possessions are seized. Then there is reward, but the reward is unknown to the world, because it happens in a realm that is beyond their grasp!

The point of all of this is simple: do not judge your situation just by what you see around you, or with what abilities or resources that you think you have. Joseph was sold into slavery by his own brothers! Joseph later ended up being in charge of all of the land. Joseph later told his brothers "you meant evil against me, but God meant it for good in order to bring about this present result, to preserve many people alive" (Genesis 50:20).What was seemingly a terrible injustice, God turned completely around!

Daniel was also a prisoner with seemingly no hope for his future! God placed him in charge of the kingdom under Nebuchadnezzar. Esther was a nobody who became Queen and saved the Jewish people in her day. Haman, who tried to have Mordecai killed, and even built the gallows upon which to have Mordecai hanged ended up being hung upon the gallows that he built (Book of Esther). Jonah, who rebelled against God, surely thought there was no more hope when he was swallowed by the great fish. Yet that was not the end for him. When we think it is too late — think again. When we think there is no hope — think again. Nothing in our lives today is based solely on our circumstances or abilities, when serving a God who has no limits. What may first appear to be a great disadvantage or wrong suffered may lead to blessings and comfort beyond your imagination in the life to come.

What we see as an injustice to ourselves, or an unfair advantage to others, will not necessarily end in what we see in this life. The final outcome may take place in this life, or in the life to come. But make no mistake — God is not fooled by clever cover-ups. He will both judge and reward by the actual thoughts and intentions of our hearts. We are all guilty, but can be declared righteous through Jesus Christ. The rewards of the Christian depend upon what they do with what God has given them. Those who have more in this life are accountable for more in the life to come. There are no disadvantaged ones when it comes to God's realm of justice and reward.

God also seems to be consistent in rising up the lowly. Jesus sought out the most unlikely to be friends with and to use to spread the Gospel. Many of the religious leaders who were looked up to and respected were the ones that Jesus harshly rebuked! When Jesus was born the announcement was made to shepherds, not kings. Those who society has rejected are the ones who Jesus chose to hang out with. Jesus praised those who seemed like "nobodies" or "rejects", and He often rebuked those whom others looked up to. In Jesus' day a woman's testimony meant nothing in a court. Yet He first appeared to women when He rose from the dead. Jesus is God and also the final judge. He views things differently than our society does!

John 5:22: "For not even the Father judges anyone, but He has given all judgment to the Son..."

Isaiah 55:8-9: "'For My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways My ways,' declares the LORD. 'For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways, and My thoughts than your thoughts.'"

Proverbs 3:5-8: "Trust in the LORD with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge Him, and He will make your paths straight. Do not be wise in your own eyes; fear the LORD and turn away from evil. It will be healing to your body, and refreshment to your bones.

I would like to share with you a short story. There was a little boy who was poor. His clothes were clean, but they were tattered and worn. He went to a Christmas party where there were many rich children who were well-dressed, had money in their pockets, and appeared to be having lots of fun! It came time for everyone to open presents. The little boy watched with wide eyes and jaw dropped as all of the well-dressed kids opened one huge present after another. Each gift was wrapped in sparkly paper, decorated with huge bows. The little boy was amazed at the tremendous gifts that the other kids were getting: sailboats, cars, trucks — if you can name it then it was there.

Finally it came time for the little boy to receive his presents! He could hardly wait! He was handed one small package wrapped in plain brown paper. He stood in disbelief and great disappointment as he looked back at all of the wonderful gifts the others had received. He could not bear to even open the present because of his disappointment.

Then I could hear God tell me to open the box. As I looked around at all of the other wonderful gifts, I still did not want to open the box. God repeated again, "Open the box!" I finally tore open the plain brown wrapper and lifted the lid off of the tattered little box and much to my amazement GOD was in the box!!!!!! He had given me Himself!!!!! Then I realized the others had nothing, and I had everything!

No, I am not a little boy, but the Lord used this illustration to show me how rich I am! As I write this, by the world's standards I am a complete failure! A loser! I am 48 years old and living in an old 12-ft. travel trailer. I own nothing but the trailer, a broken old truck, a yellow dog, and some debt. Yet I have something that many will never have or understand. Furthermore I have high hopes of being in the ministry someday and perhaps someone besides me will actually read this. Just the same I am blessed! I am reminded of the prayer of the Unknown Soldier. I do not remember exactly how it goes, but it ends something like this:

"I got nothing that I had asked for, but more than I had hoped for.
I among all men am most richly blessed!!!"

Topic Index

Table of Contents pg 1, 2, 3, 4

MY TESTIMONY

I would like to share with you my own experience of how I came to the Lord. I feel that it is unfortunate that our culture often views demons, Hell, and other such things like some sort of fairy tale.

I was born and raised in an active Mormon family. I had kind and loving parents, for which I am thankful. I grew up believing a different gospel than that which is found in the Bible; I was taught and believed Mormon doctrine. When I became a teenager I was very rebellious. Although I believed in God, I was much more interested in partying and getting in trouble. I did a lot of things back then that I am ashamed of today. One night some friends and I were watching a demonic movie. I remember my friends commenting on the movie. They were saying that if the things that were taking place in the movie were happening to them, they would leave that house. I did not see how that was an answer. I pointed out that the demons certainly were not confined to that house.

Later that night while I was working graveyard shift I was reflecting on this. I started wondering how much Satan enjoyed my lifestyle. I wondered if he had any part in my life that led to mental anguish and anger. I know this sounds crazy but the thought of this made me mad! I began to want to retaliate against him. I was alone in the shop and so I began to yell at him. I said that for every person I robbed I would tell somebody about Jesus. Not that I cared about Jesus. I just figured that would make Satan mad.

Right after this I was overwhelmed by the feeling that something evil was there in the shop with me. The feeling was so strong that it scared me. I began to pray, and the feeling went away. For the next three months or so, this same awful feeling would come upon me, even if I was not thinking about such things. Each time it scared me so much that I would begin to pray. Every time I prayed the feeling would go away; but it always seemed to come back. Things began to get worse. Sometimes while I was driving it would feel like something would grab the steering wheel of my car. I would be pulling really hard, trying to turn, then suddenly the steering would break free, as if something let go of the wheel, and I would almost wreck. I was becoming afraid to go anywhere or do anything.

One night when I had gone home, I was inserting my key into the lock when I saw something on the other side of the glass staring back at me. I jumped back and while I was looking at what I believe was a demon, it disappeared. If I was high on drugs perhaps I could have brushed it off, but I wasn't. For me, this was all I could take! I got down on my knees there in my front yard and told God that if He would just make this go away I would give my life to Him. That night these things stopped happening to me. I have a friend who had become a Christian several months before this, so I began to go to church with him.

Table of Contents pg 1, 2, 3, 4

Later I took a vacation and went to see my parents. I wanted to tell them about what had happened and the change that had taken place in my life. I figured they would be happy, considering all of the hardship I had put them through in my teenage years at home. To my surprise my dad was not pleased at all. He said I might as well not go to church at all because I was going to the wrong one. He insisted that I needed to return to the Mormon Church. This caused a lot of confusion for me. I had friends who insisted that the Mormon Church was a cult, and that it did not teach Biblical truth. But my family was telling me that the Mormon Church was the only true church.

I began to question who or what I should believe. Why should I even believe the Bible? A good friend of mine directed me to the Christian bookstore. I began to study Mormonism as well as historic Christianity. After a lot of research, study, and prayer I found a lot of factual reasons to accept the Bible as the Word of God. I also discovered just as many reasons not to accept the Book of Mormon as the Word of God. I found that Mormon doctrine is contrary to the teachings of the Bible. I also found that it could be proven that Joseph Smith was a false prophet.

I accepted the Lord around 1985, and have been studying on and off since then. I am glad to say that although the majority of my relatives are still Mormon, my dad, who was a High Priest in the Mormon Church and served on three stake missions, has left Mormonism. My Dad now has accepted Jesus and the doctrine of historic Christianity.

Several years after I accepted the Lord, Mormon missionaries started coming to my house. After some discussion, one of them asked me if I wanted my name removed from the L.D.S church records. I answered, only if somebody understood why. I gave them a book that I wrote which contained a portion of what is found on my website. I stated in a letter written on the inside of the cover of that book that I would be willing to listen to anybody who could show me in the Bible where I was wrong. I further stated that I would gladly accept any correction from the Bible since I believed that it is the final authority. About a month later I received a letter in the mail stating that they were removing my name as a member of the L.D.S church. I find it interesting that nobody within the L.D.S church ever even attempted to show me where I was wrong, scripturally, in what I had written. I am not surprised however, because I know that the L.D.S church is, in fact, one that has greatly abused the Word of God (the Bible).

I am aware of the many strong testimonies from L.D.S. members who claim to have had supernatural experiences — especially in the area of those who are deceased being grateful for L.D.S. members being baptized in their behalf. To this I must say, *we should interpret our experiences through the Bible. We should not interpret the Bible through our experiences*. The Bible warns us not to even listen to an angel if they tell us something which is contrary to the Bible. A spirit could seem good and do wonderful things for you, but if it contradicts the Bible then you know it is not from God. Some would question why a demon might do good things for anyone. Remember that if in doing so, the demon leads you away from Jesus and the truth of the Gospel, then it has accomplished its purpose.

Robert E. Kiser

Table of Contents pg 1, 2, 3, 4

Poem Index

All of the following poems were written by Robert Kiser

JESUS (pg. 284)

DYING TO SELF (pg. 284)

DEDICATED TO THE CATHOLICS (pg. 285)

WITNESSING (pg. 286)

THE DIETY OF CHRIST (286)

DISCIPLINE FROM THE LORD (pg. 287)

DEATH (pg. 287)

BABIES (pg. 287)

EVOLUTION (pg. 288)

POEMS (pg. 288)

SPRITUAL WARFARE (pg. 289)

CREATION (pg. 290)

MY FATHER (pg. 291)

BACKFIRE (pg. 292)

THE JEHOVAH'S WITNESSES' BIBLE (pg. 293)

6 FACTS (THE BOOK OF MORMON) (pg. 294)

POLITICAL PARTIES EXPLAINED (pg. 294)

Table of Contents pg 1, 2, 3, 4
Poem Index

JESUS
When they came to arrest Him,
they fell to the ground
Yet in his trial,
He made not a sound.

They whipped Him and beat Him,
and pushed thorns in His head.
Little did they know,
He would rise from the dead.

His blood soaked into that wooden cross.
Little did they know,
it was they that were lost.

He stayed up there,
when He could have came down.
It was for us He wore, the thorny crown

For you and me, He died on that cross
If you do not know Him,
my friend you are lost.

Poem Index
DYING TO SELF Matthew 10:38-39
I thought of the words of an Indian
as my heart was dying that day.
Now these words have struck me,
in a different sort of way.

A Jewish man said the same thing,
2,000 years ago.
And to this Jewish man,
this very life I owe.

The words of these men are deep;
though their meanings are worlds away.
If I follow the words of one; I cannot go astray.

These words I must follow,
I said to myself with a sigh.
The words are simply this,
IT IS A GOOD DAY TO DIE !

Table of Contents pg 1, 2, 3, 4
Poem Index

DEDICATED TO THE CATHOLICS

Simon told Mary
that her soul would be pierced. Luke 2:35
When you view it with the cross.
It was the understatement of the year.

Can you imagine how she felt?
His body all bloody and gory.
She's weeping at the cross;
and remembers His birth was holy Luke 1:48

All generations would count her blessed,
but she's in pain right then.
Her son is dying for her sins,
and the Spirit He will send.

Remember the words of Mary!
Do whatever He tells you to!! John 2:5
Yes it is to the Lord, not Mary
That you must be true

Blessed be the womb that bore you;
the woman cried out to Him. Luke 11:27
With no disrespect to Mary,
Jesus smiled and grinned.

It is to the contrary, Luke 11:28
Jesus calmly replied.
Blessed are those who hear God's word
and then His words apply.

Mary is special and dear,
and she experienced tears and pain,
but Jesus is the Lord,
and I will call upon His name.

Table of Contents pg 1, 2, 3, 4
Poem Index

WITNESSING
I'll tell people about Jesus,
for the rest of my life.
Most people won't listen.
This will cause me some strife.

But for me to say nothing,
would be as if to say.
That I have nothing,
of value to say.

And that my friend,
would be a lie!

Poem Index

THE DEITY OF CHRIS T
Jesus is God?
I thought how absurd!
I was taught different,
ever since birth.

Then I was confronted,
with God's written word.
It cut me deep,
like a two-edged sword. Hebrews 4:12

Jesus isn't God? John 1:1&14, Acts 20:28
I thought how absurd!
How can you argue,
with God's written word?

Table of Contents pg 1, 2, 3, 4
Poem Index

DISCIPLINE FROM THE LORD

Death will come upon me soon
I think it's time to change my tune
If my heart's not right with God,
He will bury me in the sod.

Psalm 7:11-13, Psalm 139:7-11
The book of Jonah, Ephesians 4:30,
Hebrews 12:6, 1 John 1:9

I grieved the Holy Spirit today;
because from God I ran away
He warned me of discipline to come
and there is nowhere to run.

I must repent and turn to Him,
and He will forgive me of my sin
Yes I think it's time to change my tune,
or death will come upon me soon.

Poem Index

DEATH

Death, death where is your sting?
I'm not afraid and I want to sing.

1 Corinthians 15:55

There's not much you can take from me,
when you think what I got in eternity.

Death, death, where is your sting?
You will come like winter,
and I will leave like spring!

Poem Index

BABIES

Babies are God's special gift;
Some people tell me of what I missed
A little child I wouldn't mind,
but there is a reason to this rhyme.
I don't need a child of my own,
if my heart's not made of stone
There are children everywhere,
with the need of love that some don't share.
I don't need a child of my own.
I need a heart not made of stone!

Table of Contents pg 1, 2, 3, 4
Poem Index

EVOLUTION
They say we came from a monkey,
but they haven't got any proof!
They know it's only a theory,
but they teach it as if it was truth.

They found a man with rickets,
His bones were a little deformed.
So there was a new theory,
And Neanderthal was formed.

Man's imagination is desperate
When he's confronted with God.
He will try to believe anything,
And bury his brains in a fog.

Creation is more scientific,
And the Bible is true.
So when confronted with the facts,
What do you think you'll do?

Poem Index

POEMS
Original thoughts
They can't be bought,
nor can they be sold.
Mysteries have been spoken,
since the days of old.
There are reasons to the rhymes,
like seasons to the times.
And sometimes in the poems,
you must read between the lines.

Table of Contents pg 1, 2, 3, 4
Poem Index

SPIRITUAL WARFARE

Satan reached out his wretched hand
He smiled about his wicked plan.
He would kill the believer's faith that night;
Then he would slit his throat and take his life. 1 Peter 5:8
But the believer's faith, it did not die.
Because he had God's word deep inside. Psalm 119:11
He stood on God's word, he wouldn't budge
Because he loved God who spilled his blood. Acts 20:28
The believer knew of Satan's lie.
He knew that others' faith had died. Matthew 24:24
Their faith wasn't grounded, in God's word.
To trust emotions seems absurd. Matthew 13:3-4
But that's what they did and then they fell
They will burn with Satan deep in hell. Hebrews 6:6,
They took the mark upon their heads; Revelations 20:10-15
Their souls might just as well be dead. Revelation 14:9-11
My friends I beg and plead with you,
Study to show yourselves approved. 2 Timothy 2:15
Then when Satan comes with his lie
You'll have God's word there inside. Psalm 119:11
Then you won't fall, and you won't budge
You'll trust in God, who spilled His blood. Ephesians 6:14, Acts 20:28
And from the dead He did arise,
And you'll be there at His side. 1 Corinthians 15:3-4,
No more tears and no more pain, 2 Corinthians 5:8,
Look at all that you will gain Ephesians 2:8-15
Because from evil you did abstain.
And it was not at all in vain,
You kept God's word deep inside
And in His word you did abide.
Yes saved by grace and not of work;
The Lord himself did all the work.
You are blessed, yes indeed —
So go on out, and plant some seeds!

Table of Contents pg 1, 2, 3, 4
Poem Index

CREATION
Jagged mountains,
shot out from the earth
And to a beautiful canyon,
they gave birth.

A natural trail was cut,
into a solid rock wall.
The huge trees were awesome
and ever so tall.

The river roared,
through the canyon below.
And in the sky,
was a beautiful bow.

The sunbeams danced,
as they came to the ground.
And the birds they made,
a beautiful sound.

Many have speculated,
how this came to be.
There has always been an answer,
but they refused to believe.

It's quite realistic...and not absurd
All this came about, by God's
spoken word. Genesis 1:1

Table of Contents pg 1, 2, 3, 4
Poem Index

MY FATHER
My father is someone, I never thank.
For me, many a time, his heart has sank.

I never thank him, I caused him grief.
It's about time, he's had some relief.

My father has loved me, all my life.
And for me, he has always sacrificed.

I love him more, than he really knows.
To me he's more wonderful, than any rainbow.

Many ways we're alike, in many ways we're not.
The bond between us, will never rot.

From my family, I seemed to grow apart.
Yet they hold a special place, within my heart.

Dad I want to say, before it's too late
I would like to meet you, at heaven's gate.

I love you more, than you'll ever know.
And THANK YOU, FATHER, for loving me so.

Table of Contents pg 1, 2, 3, 4
Poem Index

BACKFIRE
Plots of evil,
may rise against us.
But it is the Lord,
who will defend us.

Remember Haman?
and Mordecai?
And which of these
on the gallows died? Esther 7:9-10

When fear of an enemy,
begins to fester
It's time to review,
again the book of Esther.

Vengeance is mine, Romans 12:19
says the Lord!
So you need not,
fear man no more.

Do not fear, Matthew10:28 and Proverbs:7
what man can do.
Rather fear the Lord,
like He told us to.

Table of Contents pg 1, 2, 3, 4
Poem Index

THE JEHOVAH'S WITNESSES' BIBLE
The New World Translation
It is quite a funny pun.
The people who did it,
the amount of Greek they read, is none.

They couldn't read Hebrew,
Or Aramaic either.
Yet they say it is accurate
They say this to the reader.

They add words to change the context;
And they say there's no problem with that.
At least now it fits their doctrine,
Therefore it must be fact.

They got a dead-Jesus talking
While He's on the cross
And they call it a translation
Just the accuracy is lost.

Table of Contents pg 1, 2, 3, 4
Poem Index

6 FACTS
The Book of Mormon,
is a great fantasy book.
Some people think it's real,
but take another look.

It says Jesus was born in Jerusalem
in Alma 7:10
And there's no archeaology!
Ain't that a gem?

It's had 3,000 changes
In the last 200 years
It's about as consistent with their doctrine,
as a schizophrenic, I hear

It mentions horses and silk,
before they were imported.
And false prophecies by Smith
There is a great assortment.
The people who believe it,
say look at the great detail!
I say have you ever read the Hobbit?
And then their faces turn pale.

Fantasy books I like,
but if you think it's more than that
There's one thing I want to know,
have you checked out the facts?

Poem Index

POLITICAL PARTIES EXPLAINED

The Left is not Right!!
The Right is not always Right.
We have the Right to watch the Left and the Right.
In the end it is Left up to us,
Or soon we will have no more Rights Left!
Right?

Table of Contents pg 1, 2, 3, 4

Astrology and horoscopes are treated as entertainment in our society. Yet the Bible has really strong warnings about such things. In this study we will look at what the bible has to say about it and consider why it has such strong warnings against it.

You can click on Psychic's Astrology Etc. to start reading at the beginning of this topic or use the topic index to jump to the part that interest you most.

Overview of content in this section is as follows:

TOPIC INDEX

Psychics, Astrology Etc. (pg. 296)

Is Astrology scientific? US News & World Report (pg. 296)

What about the wise men that followed the star to find the child Jesus? (pg. 297)

Did Daniel use Psychic powers to know what King Nebuchadnezzar dreamed? (pg. 298)

If Astrology and other such practices are not scientific why do people turn to them? (pg. 299)

Does the Bible condemn Astrology, Psychic's, and Horoscopes etc? And if so why? (pg. 300)

Even if the Bible does condemn these things why should that bother me? (pg. 303)

Table of Contents pg 1, 2, 3, 4

PSYCHIC HOT LINE
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PSYCHICS, ASTROLOGY, HOROSCOPE, PALM READING, TAROT CARDS, FORTUNE-TELLERS, CHANNELING, OUIJA BOARD, MEDIUMS, and SEANCE

What do all of the above have in common? People have resorted to all of these things in their search for comfort and truth. Those who turn to these things are seeking information, usually about their own futures. Sometimes they are trying to find out information they believe will only be known by the deceased. In all cases this falls outside the realms of science into the area of the supernatural, and reminds me of a quote I heard. Many individuals claim origin to this quotation, and I do not remember exactly where I heard it first. However, I do remember the quote — **"I know not what the future holds but I know Who holds the future."** Ironically the people who turn to all forms of astrology are trying to discover knowledge about the future. These same people will one day answer to the One who does indeed control the future — GOD. Some people are under the impression that things such as astrology are scientific and even condoned in the Bible. For this article I will cover the following areas.

Is astrology scientific?
Are astrology and psychic phenomena condoned in the Bible?
If astrology, psychics and other such practices are not scientific, why do people turn to them?
Does the Bible condemn astrology, psychics, horoscopes, palm reading, tarot cards, fortune-tellers, channeling, Ouija boards, mediums, séances and other such practices? (And if so, why?)
Even if the Bible does condemn these things, why should that bother us?

Topic Index

Is astrology scientific?

The claims of astrology being rooted in science have drawn criticism from scientists throughout the world. *U.S. News & World Report* had an interesting article about this on May 24th, 1976. Concerning astrology, the article states that *"...scientists scoff at such beliefs."* The article goes on to say: *"A group of 186 eminent U.S. scientists recently published a lengthy statement saying that there is no scientific evidence to support [astrology]. The statement was written by Prof. Bart Bok, formerly president of the American Astronomical Society and professor emeritus of astronomy at the University of Arizona. It appeared in the Humanist, published by the American Humanist Association, and 18 Nobel Prize winners were among those who signed the statement."*

This same article gives us an example of a prediction based on astrology. *"A few weeks before the first orbiting of the moon by the Apollo 8 crew, the Federation of British Astrologers made this prophecy — 'The probability of serious personality changes among the three astronauts during this voyage is very high. Jupiter and Uranus are in conjunction for the first time in 14 years, and the influences of these planets are very strong.' Space officials ignored the warning. The mission was a success."* [B3] The conclusion of these scientists was related as follows. *"The whole system of astrology is self destructive. Imagine if every decision of your life were made by the flip of a coin. That's how much chance you have of making a right decision by using astrology."* [B3] Considering that astrology has no scientific basis and has proven itself unreliable, isn't it more logical to make decisions by using common sense and reasoning?

Topic Index

Are astrology and psychic phenomena condoned in the Bible?

I am familiar with two examples that try to support these practices with the Bible.

The wise men who followed a star to find the child Jesus: the claim is that following a star to a person is practicing astrology.

Some have claimed that Daniel used psychic powers to know what King Nebuchadnezzar dreamed in Daniel, Chapter 2.

In answer to a): the word "Magi", as we find in Chapter 2 of Matthew, is also translated "wise men". By definition, this word can indeed be ascribed to an astrologer. This is not to say that all "wise men" practiced astrology. Many people have tried to make an educated guess as to exactly who these men were. But it remains just that — an educated guess; nobody really knows for sure. Still the fact is the Bible does condemn astrology and the context of this passage neither condones nor condemns astrology. This also does not seem to be an ordinary star. When we study this passage in Matthew we find:

The star actually moved so the Magi could follow it.

The star came to a stop and was able to indicate the exact place where Jesus and His parents were staying.

The star apparently was lost from sight for a period of time, and then became visible again.

We do not know the wise men's past history. We do know that they came to find the King of the Jews so they could worship Him. This would seem unlikely for an astrologer, considering God condemns astrology.

> The fact that the men expected a star to lead them to the King of the Jews seems to imply that the Magi interpreted Numbers 24:17 as a sign to find Him. Why else would they expect a star to lead them to the King of the Jews? If they were aware of this passage in the Old Testament, it is likely they also knew the Old Testament condemned the practice of astrology. How could an astrologer study a star that was not there beforehand? We are told the star "appeared" (Matthew 2: 7-10). The evidence shows this was not a usual star observation, but rather the hand of God to direct the Magi to Jesus. This temporary phenomenon seems to have no other purpose than the one stated. It certainly had no astrological meaning.

If one were to attach a meaning to this event, the meaning would have to be to worship Jesus. That is precisely what the Magi did

Topic Index

Did Daniel use psychic powers?

In answer to b): To show this is not true is simply a matter of examining the context. The event in history that is told to us in this chapter is remarkable. King Nebuchadnezzar had a dream that greatly disturbed him. He called in the magicians, the astrologers, the sorcerers, the Chaldeans (wise men) and so forth. He told them that they must not only interpret the dream but that they must also tell him what he dreamed. If they did not do as he asked he would have them killed. Daniel was the only one who was able to tell the king what he dreamed, as well as the interpretation. However, Daniel himself does not take the credit for this accomplishment. We find in verse 18 of Daniel 2 that Daniel sought the Lord for the answer to the mystery. Verse 22 shows it was only God who could reveal the mystery of the dream to Daniel. In verses 27-28, Daniel specifically says to the king that "*neither wise men, conjurers, magicians, nor diviners are able to declare it to the king. However, there is a God in heaven who reveals mysteries, and He has made known to King Nebuchadnezzar what will take place in the latter days."* We know that Daniel not only told the king what he dreamed but that he also gave the correct interpretation of that dream. Some of the events described here coincide with end time prophecies that we find in the book of Revelation. It can be shown that history has followed, and still is following, Daniel's interpretation of King Nebuchadnezzar's dream given to him by the Lord. The difference between what Daniel did and what a psychic does is a matter of whom is sought for the answer. Daniel sought the Lord; psychics do not. There are those who claim they get their information from the Lord and tell events of the future. The Bible tells us that if they are not 100% correct all of the time, their messages are not from God (Deuteronomy 18:18-22).

Table of Contents pg 1, 2, 3, 4
Topic Index

If astrology, psychics and other such practices are not scientific, why do people turn to them?

I suppose the truth is because sometimes it works. There are those who accurately predict future events. Unlike God and His prophets in the Bible, though, they are not right all of the time. If a person talks to a psychic or astrologer and they are told some piece of information that comes true, the person can easily get caught up in going back for more information. When the information is correct, it can be kind of exciting. We have an example in the New Testament of a girl who made a profit by fortune-telling. She was correct in her message recorded in the book of Acts. (All underline, bold, and italic emphasis in this chapter mine.) Acts 16:16-19: "And it happened that as we were going to the place of prayer, a certain slave-girl having a spirit of divination met us, who was bringing her masters much profit by fortunetelling. Following after Paul and us, she kept crying out, saying, 'These men are bond-servants of the Most High God, who are proclaiming to you the way of salvation.' And she continued doing this for many days. But Paul was greatly annoyed, and turned and said to the spirit, 'I command you in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her!' And it came out at that very moment. But when her masters saw that their hope of profit was gone, they seized Paul and Silas and dragged them into the market place before the authorities."

I would like you to take note of a couple of things that we can glean from this passage.

It is possible for a fortune-teller to have insight into something that is indeed truth.

The girl's knowledge of this and future events did not come from God. Her masters even recognized that they would gain no more profit from her after the spirit was cast out. This is not an isolated incident where is spirit that was not from God recognized a truth. For example, in Matthew Chapter 8, demons that were possessing two men declared Jesus to be the Son of God.

The power from God is stronger than that from an evil spirit. Paul was able to command this sprit in the name of Jesus to depart from the girl.

Table of Contents pg 1, 2, 3, 4
Topic Index

Does the Bible condemn astrology, psychics, horoscopes, palm reading, tarot cards, fortune-tellers, channeling, Ouija board, mediums, séances, and other such practices? (And if so, why?)

There are many ways people try to find out the future and other unknown events. What they all have in common is that none of them are rooted in science. None of them are seeking God for the answer — which is ironic, because He does know everything, and God is never wrong. Let's look to the Bible to see what it says about these things.

Exodus 22:18: "You shall not allow a sorceress to live."

Leviticus 19:31: "Do not turn to mediums or spiritists; do not seek them out to be defiled by them. I am the LORD your God."

Leviticus 20:6: "As for the person who turns to mediums and to spiritists, to play the harlot after them, I will also set My face against that person and will cut him off from among his people."

Leviticus 20:27: "Now a man or a woman who is a medium or a spiritist shall surely be put to death. They shall be stoned with stones, their bloodguiltiness is upon them."

Deuteronomy 18:9-15: "When you enter the land which the LORD your God gives you, you shall not learn to imitate the detestable things of those nations. There shall not be found among you anyone who makes his son or his daughter pass through the fire, one who uses divination, one who practices witchcraft, or one who interprets omens, or a sorcerer, or one who casts a spell, or a medium, or a spiritist, or one who calls up the dead. For whoever does these things is detestable to the LORD; and because of these detestable things the LORD your God will drive them out before you. You shall be blameless before the LORD your God. For those nations, which you shall dispossess, listen to those who practice witchcraft and to diviners, but as for you, the LORD your God has not allowed you to do so. The LORD your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among you, from your countrymen, you shall listen to him.

1 Samuel 15:23: "For rebellion is as the sin of divination, and insubordination is as iniquity and idolatry. Because you have rejected the word of the LORD, He has also rejected you from being king." (Saul was told here that rebellion, the same as divination, was a sin. Because he did not obey the Lord he was rejected as king.)

1 Chronicles 10:13-14: "So Saul died for his trespass which he committed against the LORD, because of the word of the LORD which he did not keep; and also because he asked counsel of a medium, making inquiry of it and did not inquire of the LORD. Therefore He killed him, and turned the kingdom to David the son of Jesse."

Table of Contents pg 1, 2, 3, 4

2 Chronicles 33:6: “And he made his sons pass through the fire in the valley of Ben-hinnom; and he practiced witchcraft, used divination, practiced sorcery, and dealt with mediums and spiritists. He did much evil in the sight of the LORD, provoking Him to anger.”

Isaiah 8:19:”And when they say to you, ‘Consult the mediums and the spiritists who whisper and mutter,’ should not a people consult their God? Should they consult the dead on behalf of the living?”

Isaiah 44:24-25: “Thus says the LORD, your Redeemer, and the one who formed you from the womb, ‘I, the LORD, am the maker of all things, stretching out the heavens by myself, and spreading out the earth all alone, Causing the omens of boasters to fail, making fools out of diviners, causing wise men to draw back, and turning their knowledge into foolishness,’”

Isaiah 47:12-14: "Stand fast now in your spells and in your many sorceries with which you have labored from your youth; perhaps you will be able to profit, perhaps you may cause trembling. You are wearied with your many counsels; let now the astrologers, those who prophesy by the stars, those who predict by the new moons, stand up and save you from what will come upon you. Behold, they have become like stubble, fire burns them; they cannot deliver themselves from the power of the flame; there will be no coal to warm by, nor a fire to sit before!”

Jeremiah 14:14: “Then the LORD said to me, ‘The prophets are prophesying falsehood in My name. I have neither sent them nor commanded them nor spoken to them; they are prophesying to you a false vision, divination, futility and the deception of their own minds.’”

Jeremiah 29:8-9: "For thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel, 'Do not let your prophets who are in your midst and your diviners deceive you, and do not listen to the dreams which they dream. For they prophesy falsely to you in My name; I have not sent them,' declares the LORD.”

Ezekiel 13:6-9: "They see falsehood and lying divination who are saying, 'The LORD declares,' when the LORD has not sent them; yet they hope for the fulfillment of their word. Did you not see a false vision and speak a lying divination when you said, 'The LORD declares,' but it is not I who have spoken? Therefore, thus says the Lord GOD, ‘Because you have spoken falsehood and seen a lie, therefore behold, I am against you,’ declares the Lord GOD. ‘So My hand will be against the prophets who see false visions and utter lying divinations. They will have no place in the council of My people, nor will they be written down in the register of the house of Israel, nor will they enter the land of Israel, that you may know that I am the Lord GOD.’”

Zechariah 10:2: "For the teraphim speak iniquity, and the diviners see lying visions, and tell false dreams; they comfort in vain. Therefore the people wander like sheep, they are afflicted, because there is no shepherd."

Malachi 3:5: "'Then I will draw near to you for judgment; and I will be a swift witness against the sorcerers and against the adulterers and against those who swear falsely, and against those who oppress the wage earner in his wages, the widow and the orphan, and those who turn aside the alien, and do not fear Me,' says the LORD of hosts."

Matthew 24:24: "For false Christs and false prophets will arise and will show great signs and wonders, so as to mislead, if possible, even the elect. The Greek word here that was translated "false prophets" in our English Bible is defined by *Strong's* as "a spurious prophet, i.e., pretended foreteller or religious imposter."

Acts 19: 17-20: "And this became known to all, both Jews and Greeks, who lived in Ephesus, and fear fell upon them all and the name of the Lord Jesus was being magnified. Many also of those who had believed kept coming, confessing and disclosing their practices. And many of those who practiced magic brought their books together and (began) burning them in the sight of all, and they counted up the price of them and found it fifty thousand pieces of silver. So the word of the Lord was growing mightily and prevailing."

As you can see in Scripture God is definitely against such practices. Reasons why God is against these practices can be seen in the Scripture you just read.

The people should consult God (Isaiah 8:19).
They are prophesying lies and deception of their own minds (Jeremiah 14:14).
They are deceiving and misleading people (Jeremiah 29:8-9, Ezekiel 13:6-9, Matthew 24:24).
Because of them the people are afflicted and wander like sheep (Zechariah 10:2).

Nelson's Illustrated Bible Dictionary sums astrology in the following manner: "The Bible's contempt for astrology is most clearly seen in its prohibition of any technique to aid in predicting the future. Astrology assumes that God does not control history. It assumes that history is governed by the affairs of the pagan gods as revealed in the movement of the planets. The believer knows that a sovereign God rules this world. He also knows that resorting to astrology is a denial of the life of faith by which one trusts God and not his lucky stars for the future." [C2]

Table of Contents pg 1, 2, 3, 4
Topic Index

Even if the Bible does condemn these things why should that bother us?

These practices should bother the Christian a lot. God speaks strongly against these things and He disciplines those whom He loves (Hebrews 12:6). Also the Christian should consider what Jesus said in Luke 6:46: "And why do you call Me, 'Lord, Lord,' and do not do what I say?"

As far as the non-Christian, all I can say is that the fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom (Psalm 111:10). Apart from Jesus Christ a person goes to Hell. Even one sin in your whole life will keep you out of Heaven, without acceptance of Jesus and His atoning sacrifice. I suppose if you want to follow astrology and other such things rather than God, you can. If you are already rejecting Jesus Christ, what difference does it make if you are involved in these things? Apart from Jesus you will be spending eternity in Hell anyway. I believe it would be much wiser though to repent and turn to the Lord.

Topic Index

Table of Contents pg 1, 2, 3, 4

Most people do not really consider Masonry a religious organization. Yet they have definite views on God, Jesus and the Bible. Any Christian considering being a part of this organization should ask if it is compatible with Christianity. Both Masonic Books and the Bible will be used to consider this question.

You can click on **"Should a Christian be a Mason?"** to start reading at the beginning of this topic or use the topic index to jump to the part that interest you most.

Overview of content in this section is as follows:

Should a Christian be a Mason?

Overview of content in this section is as follows:

Should a Christian be a Mason? (pg. 305)

Books that are considered authoritative to the Grand Lodge (pg. 305)

Masons may not know what they are involved in because they are purposely deceived (pg. 306)

Is Masonry a religion? (pg. 307)

Secrecy and the Bible (pg. 308)

How does Masonry view Christianity? (pg. 309)

How does Masonry view the Bible? (pg. 309)

How does Masonry view God? (pg. 311)

Baalim is not the God of the Bible (pg. 311)

The Christian cannot assemble as "brethren" with the Moslem followers of Confucius etc (p.312)

How does Masonry view Jesus? (pg. 313)

On what basis are we saved according to Masonry? (pg. 313)

One cannot truly obey Masonic law and believe Christianity is true (pg. 316)

Table of Contents pg 1, 2, 3, 4

SHOULD A CHRISTIAN BE A MASON?

Many people, including some Christians, view Freemasonry as nothing more than a good social organization. Some people even believe that Freemasonry is a Christian organization, because Masons have the Bible in their Lodges, and belief in God is a requirement for membership. To the men at the lower levels of Masonry, the organization may seem to them to be just that. It is well known that many good people are Masons. The Masons are also known for many good deeds. The question is, what do those in positions of authority in Masonry have to say about it? Is Freemasonry compatible with Christianity?

On pages 16-17 of the book *The Secret Teachings of the Masonic Lodge* by John Ankerberg and John Weldon, we learn the following. The authors sent a letter to each of the fifty Grand Lodges in America, addressing the Grand Master at each one. They asked the following question, "As an official Masonic leader, which books and authors do you recommend as being authoritative on the subject of Freemasonry?"

Twenty-five of the Grand Lodges in the United States responded. A response of fifty percent is sufficiently high to suggest that the responses of the other states would not have varied significantly. In other words, we may assume that these responses are normative for U.S. Masonry as a whole. Remember, for each state, no higher jurisdictional authority than its Grand Lodge exists.[A29]

Although other books are mentioned, for this chapter I have limited myself only to the books that I own myself. All underline, bold, and italic emphasis in this chapter mine.

Out of the 50 percent of the Grand Lodges that responded, 32 percent named **Albert G. Mackey's *Revised Encyclopedia of Freemasonry*** as an authoritative work on Masonry. Also out of the 50 percent of the Grand Lodges that responded, 16 percent named *Morals and Dogma* by Albert Pike as an authoritative work on Masonry. The book *Secret Teachings of the Masonic Lodge* by John Ankerberg and John Weldon states the following, "Albert Pike should also be listed among leading Masonic authorities.

Sovereign Grand Commander, C. Fred Kleinknecht, relates the following about this Masonic scholar (in *The House of the Temple of the Supreme Council* (a text extolling the headquarters of the Supreme Council, 33d Degree): ***"Albert Pike remains an inspiration for Masons everywhere. His great book Morals and Dogma endures as the most complete exposition of the Scottish Rite philosophy. He will always be remembered and revered as the Master Builder of the Scottish Rite."*** Because of the Grand Commander's lofty estimate, when considering the meaning of the higher degrees of the Scottish Rite, we often include what Albert Pike wrote. Masons cannot claim that Pike was only teaching his "own opinions". [A29]

Table of Contents pg 1, 2, 3, 4

The quotes from Masonry in this chapter will be from the following:

Morals and Dogma of the Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite of Freemasonry, New and Revised Edition, 1966, by Albert Pike (Grand Commander 1859-1891)

Encyclopedia of Freemasonry by Albert Mackey and Charles McClenachan; Revised Edition by Edward Hawkins and William Hughan, 1927, 2 Volumes (Albert G. Mackey, 33rd degree Worshipful Grand Master)

Topic Index

The majority of people in Masonry probably do not know what they are involved in. The reason why they do not know is because they are purposely deceived

Morals and Dogma by Albert Pike

page 819: "The Blue Degrees are but the outer court or portico of the temple. Part of the symbols are displayed there to the Initiate, but he is intentionally misled by false interpretations. It is not intended that he should understand them; but it is intended that he shall imagine he understands them. Their true explication is reserved for the Adepts, the Princes of Masonry."A26 **(PDF pg. 819)**

pages 104-105:"Masonry, like all the Religions, all the Mysteries, Hermeticism and Alchemy, conceals its secrets from all except the Adepts and Sages, or the Elect, and uses false explanations and misinterpretations of its symbols to mislead those who deserve only to be mislead; to conceal the Truth, which it calls Light, from them, and to draw them away from it. Truth is not for them who are unworthy or unable to receive it, or would pervert it." A26 **(PDF pg. 104-105)**

This clearly shows that those in the lower levels of Masonry do not know what they are involved in. I would like to point out that false explanations or interpretations and intentionally misleading someone is nothing more than lying! The Bible tells us that lying is something that God hates (Proverbs 6:16-17).

Table of Contents pg 1, 2, 3, 4
Topic Index

Many people believe that Masonry is not a religion. Yet when we look to the authorities in Masonry we find that Masonry *is* a religion and a system of worship that is filled with secrecy.

Albert Mackey quotes four definitions of religion by Webster's dictionary, and then states the following:

Encyclopedia of Freemasonry, Revised Edition, Vol.2

> page 618: "Now, it is plain that, in either of the first three senses in which we may take the word religion (and they do not vary materially differ from each other), Masonry may rightfully claim to be called a religious institution."A27 **(PDF pg. 615)**

If Albert Mackey says Masonry may rightfully claim to be called a religious institution, on what basis would you disagree with him?

Morals and Dogma

> page 210: "Masonry is the legitimate successor- from the earliest times the custodian and depository of the great philosophical and religious truths, unknown to the world at large..."A26**(PDF pg. 210)**

Who possesses "religious truths" other than religions?

> page 219: "Masonry labors to improve the social order by enlightening men's minds, warming their hearts with the love of good, inspiring them with the great principle of human fraternity, and requiring of its disciples that their language and actions shall conform to that principle, that they shall enlighten each other, control their passions abhor vice, and pity the vicious man as one afflicted with a deplorable malady. It is the universal, eternal, immutable religion, such as God planted in the heart of universal humanity. No creed has ever been long-lived that has not been built upon this foundation." A26 **(PDF pg. 219)**

Is not Masonry claiming to pursue this universal, eternal, immutable religion?

Table of Contents pg 1, 2, 3, 4
Topic Index

Encyclopedia of Freemasonry, Revised Edition, Vol.2

> page 675: "The Entered Apprentice begins his Masonic career by learning the duty of secrecy and silence. Hence it is appropriate that in the degree which is the consummation of initiation, in which the whole cycle of Masonic science is completed, the abstruse machinery of symbolism should be employed to impress the important virtues on the mind of the neophyte. The same principles of secrecy and silence existed in all the ancient mysteries and systems of worship." A27 **(PDF pg. 674)**

Isn't Masonry identifying itself with ancient systems of worship? And adopting a duty secrecy and silence for themselves?

Since we have established that Masonry authorities consider Freemasonry to be a religion, the next question is, how does this religion compare to Christianity? The following Scripture is provided to show a contrast between Masonry and the teachings of the Bible.

> John 18:20:"Jesus answered him, 'I have spoken openly to the world; I always taught in synagogues, and in the temple, where all the Jews come together; and I spoke nothing in secret.'"

> Luke 8:16-17: "Now no one after lighting a lamp covers it over with a container, or puts it under a bed; but he puts it on a lamp stand, in order that those who come in may see the light. For nothing is hidden that shall not become evident, nor anything secret that shall not be known and come to light."

Whether or not secrecy in Masonry differs from the teachings of the Bible may seem trivial. What about more important issues? How does Masonry view Christianity? How does Masonry view the Bible? How does Masonry view God? How does Masonry view Jesus? On what basis are we saved, according to Masonry? The following answers and contrasts between Masonry and Christianity may surprise you.

Table of Contents pg 1, 2, 3, 4
Topic Index

How does Masonry view Christianity?

Masonry makes no claims to being a Christian organization.

Encyclopedia of Freemasonry, Revised Edition, Vol.1:

pages 148-149: "The interpretation of the symbols of Freemasonry from a Christian point of view is a theory adopted by some of the most distinguished Masonic writers of England and this country, but one which I think does not belong to the ancient system. Hutchinson, and after him Oliver — profoundly philosophical as are the Masonic speculations of both — have, I am constrained to believe, fallen into a great error in calling the Master Mason's Degree a Christian institution.....If Masonry were simply a Christian institution, the Jew and the Moslem, the Brahman and the Buddhist, could not conscientiously partake of its illumination." A27 **(PDF pg. 160-161)**

Morals and Dogma

page 105: "The teachers, even of Christianity, are in general, the most ignorant of the true meaning of what they teach. There is no book of which so little is known as the Bible. To most who read it, it is as incomprehensible as the Sohar."A26 **(PDF pg. 105)**

In actuality, there is more evidence for, and study on, the Bible than on any other book in the world. The Bible does tell us why someone such as Albert Pike could not understand the Bible (see 1 Corinthians 2:14-16 and 1:18).

Topic Index

How does Masonry view the Bible?

Morals and Dogma

page 11: "The Bible is an indispensable part of the furniture of a *Christian* Lodge, only because it is the sacred book of the Christian religion. The Hebrew Pentateuch in a Hebrew Lodge, and the Koran in a Mohammedan one, belong on the alter; and one of these, and the square and compass, properly understood, are the Great Lights by which a Mason must walk and work. **(PDF pg.11)**

"The obligation of the candidate is always to be taken on the sacred book or books of his religion, that he may deem it more solemn and binding; and therefore it was asked of what religion you were. We have no other concern with your religious creed."A26 **(PDF pg.11)**

Here we learn that in Freemasonry, the Bible is no more than a piece of furniture and no greater than the Koran or other religious books. It is only used for the candidate to take an oath for Masonry. In contrast the Bible claims to be more than a piece of furniture.

2 Timothy 3:16: "All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness;"

Isaiah 40:8: "The grass withers, the flower fades, but the word of our God stands forever."

The Bible also warns the Christian about taking such oaths.

James 5:12:"But above all, my brethren, do not swear, either by heaven or by earth or with any other oath; but let your yes be yes, and your no, no; so that you may not fall under judgment."

Morals and Dogma

page 744: "The Bible, with all the allegories it contains, expresses, in an incomplete and veiled manner only, the religious science of the Hebrews. The doctrine of Moses and the prophets, identical at bottom with that of the ancient Egyptians, also had its outward meaning and veils. The Hebrew books were written only to recall to memory the traditions; and they were written in Symbols unintelligible to the Profane."[A26]
(PDF pg. 744-745)

We can glean the following from Albert Pike's statement; his claims were that:

The Bible is written in an incomplete and veiled manner.
The doctrine of Moses is identical at its base with that of the ancient Egyptians.
The Hebrew books (the Old Testament) were written only to recall to memory the traditions.

Let's view these three points in contrast with the Bible.

The Bible is written in an incomplete and veiled manner.

Acts 20:27: "For I did not shrink from declaring to you the whole purpose of God.
"The Apostle Paul claims he declared the whole purpose of God. How would one then view this as incomplete?

The doctrine of Moses is identical at its base with that of the ancient Egyptians.

It is through Moses that we received the Ten Commandments. We are told in these commandments in Deuteronomy 5:7 and Exodus 20:3 that God says "You shall have no other gods before Me". The ancient Egyptians did not worship the God of the Bible. So how can one view the doctrine of Moses as identical at its base with that of the ancient Egyptians?

Table of Contents pg 1, 2, 3, 4

> ***The Hebrew books (the Old Testament) were written only to recall to memory the traditions***.

Jesus would seem to disagree with this statement by Albert Pike.

John 5:39-40 says, "You search the Scriptures, because you think that in them you have eternal life; and it is these that bear witness of Me; and you are unwilling to come to Me, that you may have life."

At the time Jesus said this, all the people had were the Hebrew books that make up the Old Testament. Certainly Jesus did not think they were written only to recall traditions. In Mark Chapter 7, Jesus condemned the Pharisees for following traditions while neglecting the commandment of God.

Topic Index

How does Masonry view God?

Morals and Dogma

> page 226: "Masonry, around whose alters the Christian, the Hebrew, the Moslem, the Brahmin, the followers of Confucius and Zoroaster, can assemble as brethren and unite in prayer to the one God who is above all the Baalim"A26 **(PDF pg. 226)**

For the Christian there are two problems with this statement.

> **Baalim is not the God of the Bible.**
> **The Christian cannot assemble as "brethren" with the Moslem, followers of Confucius, and so forth.**

Topic Index

Baalim is not the God of the Bible.

Baal is a variation of the word Baalim. This word and its variation appears about seventy-five times in the Old Testament. In every case it is referring to a false deity. Following is one example of how it is used. Judges 2:11 (KJV):**"And the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the LORD, and served Baalim..."**

Table of Contents pg 1, 2, 3, 4

The American Peoples Encyclopedia, 1959, Vol.2, pages 897-898 has the following to say about the baalim. "The baalim were rather local deities each of whom gave fertility to his district and thus became an object of worship. The Israelites found the cult everywhere when they entered Canaan and naturally adopted it calling Yahweh their baal. As the baalim were gods of fertility, the rites of the baal worship degenerated into sensuality and thus the Yahweh cult was corrupted. The prophets denounced it and to the later Jews the name was so offensive that they substituted *bosheth,* 'shame', for it. The term **Beelzebub was derived from it."** A17

(Yahweh is translated as "Jehovah", which is a name for God. Beelzebub is a name for Satan, as used in Luke 11:18.)

Topic Index

The Christian cannot assemble as "brethren" with the Moslem, followers of Confucius, and so forth.

From a Biblical perspective a brother is a fellow Christian. This is shown in the fact that Paul spoke of false brethren in 2 Corinthians 11:26 and Galatians 2:4. Paul also referred to a so-called brother in 1 Corinthians 5:11.

In the following Scripture we can see that Jesus took the same view of a brother. Matthew 12:49-50:"And stretching out His hand toward His disciples, He said, 'Behold, My mother and My brothers! For whoever does the will of My Father who is in heaven, he is My brother and sister and mother.'"

We find the same view of a brother from the writer of Hebrews. Hebrews 2:10-11:"For it was fitting for Him, for whom are all things, and through whom are all things, in bringing many sons to glory, to perfect the author of their salvation through sufferings. For both He who sanctifies and those who are sanctified are all from one Father for which reason He is not ashamed to call them brethren."

It should be easy to see that from a Biblical perspective the Christian is not a brother to the Moslem, followers of Confucius, and so forth. Paul sums up the reason the Christian cannot "assemble as brethren and unite in prayer" with the non-believer in the following passage from 2 Corinthians 6:14-17: "Do not be bound together with unbelievers; for what partnership have righteousness and lawlessness, or what fellowship has light with darkness? Or what harmony has Christ with Belial, or what has a believer in common with an unbeliever? Or what agreement has the temple of God with idols? For we are the temple of the living God; just as God said, 'I will dwell in them and walk among them; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people. Therefore, come out from their midst and be separate,' says the Lord."

Table of Contents pg 1, 2, 3, 4
Topic Index

How does Masonry view Jesus?

Morals and Dogma

page 525: "It *(Masonry)* reverences all the great reformers. It sees Moses, the Law-giver of the Jews, in Confucius and Zoroaster, in Jesus of Nazareth, and in the Arabian Iconoclast, Great teachers of Morality, and Eminent Reformers, if no more: and allows every brother of the Order to assign to each such higher and even Divine Character as his creed and Truth require."[A26] **(PDF pg. 525)**

The problem with putting Jesus as just another in the list of "*Great teachers of Morality, and Eminent Reformers"* is that Jesus Himself claimed to be much more. He claimed to be the only way to Heaven. None of the others mentioned are God in the flesh or the Redeemer of mankind. John 14:6" "Jesus said to him, 'I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father, but through Me.'" (See also John 1:1 and 14, and 3:16.)

Topic Index

On what basis are we saved, according to Masonry? *Encyclopedia*

of Freemasonry, Revised Edition, Vol.1 **(PDF pg. 284)**

page 269: "The lecture of the Third Degree begins by declaring that the recipient was induced to seek that sublime degree 'that he might perfect himself in Masonry, so as to travel into foreign countries, and work and receive wages as a Master Mason.'

"Thousands have often heard this ritualistic expression at the opening and closing of a Master's Lodge, without dreaming for a moment of its hidden and spiritual meaning, or, if they think of any meaning at all, they content themselves by interpreting it as referring to the actual travels of the Masons, after the completion of the Temple, into the surrounding countries in search of employment, whose wages were to be the gold and silver which they could earn by the exercise of their skill in the operative art.

"But the true symbolic meaning of the foreign country into which the Master Mason travels in search of wages is far different.

"The symbolism of this life terminates with the Master Degree. The completion of that degree is the lesson of death and the resurrection to a future life, where the TRUE WORD, or Divine Truth, not given in this, is to be received as the reward of a life worthily spent in its search. in the reception of that TRUTH can be imparted only in that better land. "Heaven, the future life, the higher state of existence after death, is the foreign country in which the Master Mason is to enter, and there he is to receive his wages in the reception of the TRUTH which can be imparted only in that better land."[A27]

The following is what can be gleaned from this statement.

The Mason is to work to perfect himself in Masonry so as to receive a reward in heaven.
The reward given is Divine Truth.
He receives this Divine Truth because of his life worthily spent in search of it.

Encyclopedia of Freemasonry, Revised Edition, Vol.2 **(PDF pg. 809)**

page 805: "The higher idea of truth which pervades the whole Masonic system, and which is symbolized by the Word, is that which is properly expressed to a knowledge of God.

"There was an Egyptian goddess named, *Thm, or Thme, integritas*, Justice and Truth. This one of the three great Masonic principles is represented among the Egyptians by an ostrich feather; and the judicial officer was also thus represented, 'because that bird, unlike others, has all its feathers equal.' Horapollo. The Hebrew word, *ion*, signifies an ostrich, as also a council; and the word, *Rnne*, is interpreted, poetically, an ostrich, and also a song of joy, or of praise; hence, 'the happy souls thus ornamented, under the inspection of the lords of the heart's joy, gathered fruits from celestial trees.' In the judgment in Amenti, the soul advances toward the goddess Thme, who wears on her head the ostrich feather. In the scale, Anubis and Horus weigh the actions of the deceased. On one side is the ostrich feather, and on the other the vase containing the heart. Should the weight of the heart be greater than the feather, the soul is entitled to be received into the celestial courts. The forty-two judges, with heads ornamented with ostrich feathers, sit aloft to pronounce judgment. (See *Book of the Dead*.)" [A27]

The following can be gleaned from this statement:

The actions or deeds of the deceased are measured.
These actions determine the weight of the heart.
Ultimately these actions determine if the soul of the deceased is entitled to enter into the celestial courts.

The Board of General Activities, Grand Lodge, F. &A.M., New York, 1928, copyrighted a Bible with Masonic helps of which I have a copy. On page 5 under the title "*The Masonic Belief*" the fourth statement of faith reads, "Character determines destiny."[A28]

Out of these three statements by the Masons we can conclude the following. The Mason must work to perfect himself. If by his actions he is found worthy, he is entitled to enter heaven to receive his reward of divine truth. As summed up by the Masons, his character determines his destiny.

Jesus said we can receive the truth now (John 8:32).We don't have to wait until judgment day. The real problem is that all of our good deeds put together are like a filthy rag to the Lord (Isaiah 64:6). If you keep the whole law and stumble one time you are guilty of all (James 2:10 and Galatians 3:10) One mistake is enough to send you to Hell (Matthew 5:22). No one goes to Heaven because of good deeds. The only way anyone goes to Heaven is by faith in Jesus Christ (John 3:16). To try to go to Heaven based on good deeds is to try to earn your way to Heaven.

Ephesians 2:8-9: "For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; not as a result of works, that no one should boast." You cannot earn a gift; if you earned it, then it would no longer be a gift!

Romans 3:20:"...because **by the works of the Law no flesh will be justified** in His sight; for through the Law comes the knowledge of sin."

Galatians 3:3: "Are you so foolish? Having begun by the Spirit, are you now being perfected by the flesh?" Even our good deeds after coming to Jesus have nothing to do with our salvation. We do good deeds because we love him (John 14:15).

Galatians 2:21: "I do not nullify the grace of God; for if righteousness comes through the Law, then Christ died needlessly."

1 Corinthians 15:17: "...and if Christ has not been raised, your faith is worthless; you are still in your sins."

John 6:28-29: "They said therefore to Him, 'What shall we do, that we may work the works of God?' Jesus answered and said to them, 'This is the work of God, that you believe in Him whom He has sent.'"This is the only work that you can do for your salvation.

Table of Contents pg 1, 2, 3, 4

Topic Index

Obviously the Masonic religion is not compatible with Christianity, taking a Biblical standpoint. But it does not end there — from a Mason's view you cannot truly obey Masonic law and believe Christianity is true. Christianity claims that Jesus is the only way of salvation for mankind (Acts 4:12). This does not agree with other religions.

Compare this to Albert Pike's statement on page 167 of ***Morals and Dogma***:"No man truly obeys the Masonic law who merely tolerates those whose religious opinions are opposed to his own. Every man's opinions are his own private property, and the rights of all men to maintain each his own are perfectly equal. Merely to tolerate, to bear with an opposing opinion, is to assume it to be heretical: and assert the right to persecute, if we would; and claim our toleration of it as a merit."A26 **(PDF pg. 167)**

The Christian is told to contend for the faith (Jude 1:3). "Contend" means to strive in debate, or argue. Such argument is to be done with gentleness and reverence (1 Peter 3:15).

I would like to end this topic by reminding you that there are many good people, even Christians, who are Masons. The Masons are known for many good deeds that are admirable. Keep in mind that a large percentage of Masons probably have no idea of the actual teachings of the Masonic belief. They do not know both because they have not researched Masonry, and because the beginning levels are purposely designed to be deceptive. If you are a Christian and a Mason, I encourage you to research this for yourself. Consider carefully Masonry in the light of the quotes from Masonic authorities and Scripture provided in this study.

The question you must answer for yourself is, "should a Christian be a Mason?"

Topic Index

Table of Contents pg 1, 2, 3, 4

WHAT IS A CULT?

Many people confuse "a cult" with the "occult". More confusion results from using the word in different ways — and those involved in a cult sometimes refer to themselves as "Christian", which further muddies the water. The definition of "cult" remains unclear, even after looking to the dictionary. For example, Random House *Webster's College Dictionary* states the following under "**cult"** (all underline and bold emphasis in this chapter mine)**:**

> a group that devotes itself to or venerates a person, ideal, fad, etc.
> 3**,** a religion or sect considered to be false, unorthodox, or extremist. E11

According to the second definition, all of us who follow the Jesus of the Bible would be identified as a cult. Yet, we would refer to others as members of a cult when we utilize the third definition.

Generally the word "occult" is applied to those involved in witchcraft or the worship of Satan, although it also applies to fortune telling, astrology, tarot cards, et al. Confusion enters the picture when those who are not considered part of the occult still follow certain occult practices, such as activities found in Masonry, or Mormonism.

Random House *Webster's College Dictionary* 1996 describes "**occult":**

> of or pertaining to any system claiming use or knowledge of secret or supernatural powers or agencies.
> beyond ordinary knowledge or understanding.
> secret; disclosed or communicated only to the initiated.
> hidden from view E11

The third and fourth definitions can be applied to both Mormonism and Masonry due to the secret ceremonies that some are involved in.

Generally speaking, religions that do not believe or follow historic Christianity are considered cults. The Protestant movement is a part of historic Christianity. *Merriam Webster's Collegiate Dictionary Tenth Edition*, 1993, "b" definition of "Protestant":

> a member of any of several church denominations denying the universal authority of the Pope and affirming the Reformation principles of justification by faith alone, the priesthood of all believers, and the primacy of the Bible as the only source of revealed truth. A13

Table of Contents pg 1, 2, 3, 4

Let me explain a little bit of what we mean by historic Christianity. Doctrines that we find taught in the Bible can be traced throughout history. For example, the writings of the early church fathers. These are the men who studied directly under the Apostles, and the men who studied under them. These men did a lot of writing. One such man is Polycarp, who studied directly under the disciple John (whose writings are part of the New Testament). The writings of the early church fathers are not considered Scripture, but are valuable just the same. They confirm what the original disciples taught and believed. These writings are a good reference to verify if the church today is teaching the same doctrines as the original church that we see developed in the book of Acts. When you study church history you can see that this is what the reformation period was all about. The church that we see developed in the Bible in the book of Acts evolved into the Catholic Church. The Catholic Church developed its own doctrines, beliefs that were not taught by the original disciples or found in the Bible. Later men such as Martin Luther strongly protested those false doctrines and a movement breaking away from Catholicism developed. As time went on many denominations ended up developing, due to doctrinal issues.

There are today many denominational and non-denominational churches that are at the core following historic Christianity. They agree on major doctrinal issues, but disagree on minor doctrines. There are doctrines that are emphasized more than others in the Bible. **Keep in mind that there are no denominations in heaven — only believers in the Lord Jesus Christ** (1 Corinthians Chapter 12). We do not need to be theologians to go to heaven!

Following are the major doctrines of historic Christianity. **All cults will deny one or more of these doctrines.** In addition, cults often deny that Hell is a real place of torment, and frequently claim to be the "only true church".

Major doctrinal issues are:

- The authority of the Bible (2 Timothy 3:16, Isaiah 40:7-8).
- The belief in only one true and living God (Isaiah 44:8, Deuteronomy 5:7). (The Trinity)
- The deity of Jesus Christ; Jesus is fully God, and fully man (John 1:1 and 14, Philippians 2:5-8, John 8:24).
- The bodily resurrection of Jesus Christ (Psalm 16:10, John 2:19-22, 1 Corinthians 15:1-4).
- Salvation by grace apart from works (Ephesians 2:8-9, Romans 4:4-5, 11:6).

These are the essentials of the Gospel message and historic Christianity. These doctrines not only can be clearly shown in the Bible, but also in the writings of the early church fathers. Those who do not believe these essentials should carefully examine the Scriptures, because they do not believe the Gospel taught in the Bible. There are warnings for accepting a false Christ or Gospel (Galatians 1:6-9, Matthew 24:5 and 11, Proverbs 16:25).

There are many non-denominational and community churches that teach these truths. There are also many mainline denominations that believe these truths; to name only a few — Assembly of God, Calvary Church, Baptist, Pentecostal, Lutheran, Seventh Day Adventist, Foursquare, and Nazarene. These are all Christian churches that may disagree on the minor doctrines, yet can still fellowship with one another because they believe the same major doctrines, and worship the same God.

There are also denominations that do not believe these essential truths, and are considered cults: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints (Mormons), Kingdom Hall (Jehovah Witnesses), Baha'i World Faith, Christian Science, Scientology (L. Ron Hubbard), The Unification Church, Unity School of Christianity, and The Way International. You can write for more information on any of these denominations. You will also find information on them in the "Cult" section of your local Christian bookstore, or on the internet.

Minor doctrinal issues include:
Is the gift of tongues applicable today?
Can a Christian eat meat?
Will the church be raptured before, during, or after the tribulation?
Should we worship on Saturday, or Sunday?

These are minor doctrines because no matter what you believe on these issues, it does not affect your salvation. You can still be a Christian and go to heaven, no matter which side you take; these are not essentials of the Gospel message.

We do not need to guess which is a major or minor doctrine as the Bible itself puts more emphasis on certain teachings.

Mormonism Index

Mormonism is a broad subject. This page provides links to various topics concerning Mormonism. You can choose a link from here or just turn the page and start reading at the beginning. At anytime you can click on **Mormonism Index** to come back here.

To the Mormon Reading this Book (pg. 321)

Are Mormons Christians? (pg. 323)

L.D.S view of Christianity (pg. 330)

Is it important what a church teaches? (pg. 331)

The prophet Joseph Smith (pg. 336)

False Prophecies (pg. 339)

A different God (pg. 355)

A different Jesus (pg. 359)

A different Holy Spirit (pg. 365)

A different Gospel (pg. 369)

Grace VS Works – This is a different section of this book that should be read as well. (pg. 52)

Baptism for the Dead (pg. 373)

L.D.S Standard Works (Mormon Scripture) (pg. 391)

The Church did not need to be restored (pg. 405)

God's foreknowledge not pre-existence (pg. 408)

Marriage for eternity and polygamy (pg. 410)

Priesthood (pg. 415)

No other Gods (This section is following the Trinity in this book) (pg. 39)

L.D.S Leaders (pg. 436)

Miscellaneous (pg. 446)

TO THE MORMON READING THIS BOOK

I was born and raised in the L.D.S church, and there are many good things that I can say about people that I knew in the church. I have no bitter memories at all that pertain to the L.D.S Church. My objection is not toward any of the people, or past experiences I had while I was in the church. My objection is simply that the doctrine of the L.D.S. church is not true, and I believe that this book will offer evidence to that fact.

I have some very good memories of attending the L.D.S church as a youngster. As a teenager I decided I hated going to church, but it was not because of any dislike for the people there. I do not really know why I became so rebellious, but I did. Knowing what I know now, I am thankful that I am not a Mormon. Words cannot express how grateful I am to be able to fellowship with my Dad in the Lord and to know with certainty that I will see him in heaven. My Dad never disowned me, even though I gave him every reason. My rebellious nature made life miserable for my parents, and my Uncle Philip and Aunt Louise, as well. For this I will always be ashamed, and I wish that I could change my past — but I can't.

As I stated in my testimony, I became confused when my family rejected my new relationship with Christ. Friends told me I was right, and my family told me I was wrong. This confusion drove me into an in-depth search for truth. I fired questions at people on both sides of the issue. For the most part the Mormons I questioned simply told me to pray about it, and accept Mormonism as truth. I was greatly disappointed that they had no answers. Some, such as my Dad, tried to answer — but the answers were not concrete in Scripture (the Bible), or facts. On the other hand, Christians who told me that Mormonism was wrong usually had concrete answers to my questions. They took the time to search for the answers and were patient with me as I continued to fire more questions at them.

To change what you have been taught all of your life is a struggle. I still do not claim to know the answer to everything; in fact, I know very little, but I do know this: the Bible is trustworthy and when it disagrees with me, it is I who am wrong, and not the Bible. Granted, when you first see that the Bible disagrees with you, it is a struggle to let go of what you believe; that reluctance to change your beliefs makes you search, and study for confirmation that you really are wrong. *If the Bible says you are wrong then you are wrong* and you must adjust your beliefs in accordance with the Bible, not in accordance with what someone may have told you are truths, nor even in accordance to what you feel. Proverbs 14:12 tells us, “There is a way which seems right to a man, but its end is the way of death." We are also warned against false teachings, false Christ’s, and false prophets (Matthew 24:24, Galatians 1:8). As we can see in John8:24, it is extremely important to know who Jesus really is.

I am reminded of a few things I can remember my Dad saying on more than one occasion. He used to say, *"I know the church is true and I would stake my life on it"* (he was, of course, referring to the Mormon Church). He was indeed staking his life on it, as well as his eternity. If you are L.D.S., then you also are staking your eternity on the idea that its doctrines are true. Conversely, if my claim that the L.D.S. church is not true is correct, then you are making a fatal error. This book was written out of love and concern, and I hope you can see that, even if you do not like what it says. To not share the truth with you would be a sin in itself.
PLEASE PRAYERFULLY CONSIDER AND STUDY. Your eternity depends on it! I also remember my Dad saying, *"If the Mormon Church is not true, then there is no truth".* I am glad my Dad now understands that his previous belief was inaccurate. The Bible is indeed the Word of God and contrary to what the L.D.S. authorities have said, it is very trustworthy.

I feel that it is important to say that if you leave the Mormon Church, and do not turn to the Jesus in the Bible and trust in Him and His written word, you have gained nothing. The L.D.S Church itself is full of good well-meaning people. With their friendship at least you can live a better life. The Mormon Church has a good social structure, which helps to make it successful.

Terminology from different people makes discussion rather confusing; many say Jesus is the "Son of God", but what does that mean to them? The Jehovah's Witnesses say that it means that Jesus is Michael the Archangel, who is a god, but not the Almighty God. The L.D.S. authorities tell us that "Son of God" means that Jesus is a God who is the son of Elohim and the brother of Lucifer, as well as our elder brother in the spirit world. The Bible teaches that Jesus is part of the Godhead; God in human form, the creator and the only God that exists (1 John 5:7, Philippians 2:5-11, John 1:1 and 14, Colossians 1:15, Colossians 1:13-17, Isaiah 43:10, and Isaiah44:80.

I have found when I talk to people who are opposed to what I believe, they may ask me questions to which I do not know the answer, and I will search for the answer. When I find the answer, it increases my faith. I propose the same to you; if my Dad and I are both wrong, show us how, and we will be forever grateful. If you do indeed possess the truth, looking into these matters will only increase your faith. However if you do not possess the truth, looking into these matters will destroy your faith in Mormonism, as it did for my Dad and I.

I did indeed pray as to whether the Book of Mormon was the Word of God. Every time I prayed about this, false prophecies by Joseph Smith came to mind. I feel God answered my prayer in this way. My Dad and I differ a little on what disturbed us and caused us to reject Mormonism. Still what matters most is what we replaced it with — my Dad and I both replaced Mormonism with truth and a wonderful relationship with *a person*, not *a church*. My relationship with Jesus is greater than anything I experienced as a Mormon. He is not just a doctrine, but a person who wants to have a real and meaningful relationship with you, as well.

Meant with Love
Robert E. Kiser

Joseph Smith informs us that ALL Christian Churches were an abomination in Gods sight. Then they turn around and say they are Christians. The Mormon Church rejects almost all of the major doctrines believed in the Christian Church.

You can click on Are Mormons Christians To start reading at the beginning of this topic or use the page index to jump to the part that interest you most.

To see index for all topics on Mormonism click on "**Mormonism Index**" above

Overview of content in this section is as follows:

Topic Index

Are Mormons Christians?

The Mormon Mitt Romney while running for president said Mormons are not Christians

Why Pick on Mormons?

Are Mormons Christians?

Although Mormons themselves today call themselves Christians it may be interesting to consider what their prophet had to say.

Consider the following statement by Joseph Smith the founder of Mormonism.

History of the Church, Vol.6, Ch.19, p.408 **(PDF pg. 2432)**
(Joseph Smith speaking here.)

I have more to boast of than ever any man had. I am the only man that has ever been able to keep a whole church together since the days of Adam. A large majority of the whole have stood by me. Neither Paul, John, Peter, nor Jesus ever did it. I boast that no man ever did such a work as I. The followers of Jesus ran away from Him; but the Latter-day Saints never ran away from me yet.

Ignore for a minute the boastful attitude of Joseph Smith here. In the last sentence is he not putting the followers of Jesus and the latter-day Saints in two separate categories?

If a Christian is a follower of Jesus Christ then why does he not include himself and the Latter-day Saints in this same category?

Looking at this statement by Joseph Smith; is the church that he claimed to hold together the same church that was established by Jesus? Is it the same church that Paul, John or Peter tried to help build? Or does Joseph Smith seem to place the latter-day Saints (Mormons) into another category?

The Mormon Church claims it is the restored true church. Did the church need to be restored or just reformed?

Matt 16:18 (Jesus Speaking)
"And I also say to you that you are Peter, and upon this rock I will build My church; and the gates of Hades shall not overpower it.
(NAS)

I find it ironic that Mormons even want to claim to be Christians. After all their own Prophet Joseph Smith testified that everything Christians today believe is an abomination to God. Why would they want to be identified with those who according to their prophet are offensive to God?

PEARL OF GREAT PRICE (Mormon Scripture)(PDF- L.D.S Scripture, pg. 919)
Joseph Smith History 1:18-19 (Also called Joseph Smith 2)
18 My object in going to inquire of the Lord was to know which of all the sects was right, that I might know which to join. No sooner, therefore, did I get possession of myself, so as to be able to speak, than I asked the Personages who stood above me in the light,
which of all the sects was right (for at this time it had never entered into my heart that all were wrong)--and which I should join.
19 I was answered that I must join none of them, for they were all wrong; and the Personage who addressed me said that all their creeds were an abomination in his sight; that those professors were all corrupt; that: "they draw near to me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me, they teach for doctrines the commandments of men, having a form of godliness, but they deny the power thereof." E

Notice we are told all of our creeds are an abomination to him. Now a creed is a statement of the fundamental beliefs. For the Christian Church this would include the following.

There is only one true and living God.
This God is described as a Trinity
Jesus is fully God and fully man.
Salvation is to be rescued or delivered from the wrath of God by the sacrifice Jesus made on the cross. This is a free gift that cannot be earned.
5. The bible is the word of God and it is trustworthy. .

This is not an exhaustive list of Major Christian doctrines, but you would be hard pressed to find a knowledgeable Christian who objected to any of these short statements. Yet Mormonism disagrees with every one of them.

Mormonism tries to say that over time much of the beliefs of the original church were changed. Sadly they seem to be ignorant of the fact that all of these beliefs can be shown to be taught by Christians that lived in the first century. We still have the writings of men such as Clement of Rome, Hermas, Ignatius, Papias and Polycarp. These are all men that were taught directly by the original Apostles. These and others in the first century confirm the major doctrines that are taught by the church today. These are the very creeds that Joseph Smith says he was told were an abomination to God.

Mormonism denies 99.9% of the major doctrines taught by the 1st century church and still wants to identify itself as a Christian Church because it has Jesus' name on the church. I say 99.9% because they do believe that Jesus bodily rose from the dead. This is the only major Christian Doctrine that I know of that they do accept.

They deny what the Bible teaches about whom God and Jesus are as well as salvation and still cling to the name that is on their church.

Suppose I had a German Shepherd and named him Kitty. I put his name on his collar and write Cat on this food bowel and bed. Suppose I feed him cat food and convince some people that he is really a cat. Is my German Shepherd really a cat? I could even say that others persecute me by not allowing me to rent from places that do not allow dogs. Yet I do not have a dog. I have a German Shepherd named Kitty. I insist that my German Shepherd is a cat. Is he therefore a cat?

Are Mormons Christians? Is my German Shepherd a Cat? Would you be interested in buying some ocean front property in Arizona?

Look into the facts folks. One is not a Christian just because they claim to follow someone named Jesus yet deny what the Bible teaches about God, Jesus and Salvation.

Some may say that is your interpretation. Well show me Mormon doctrine from any Christian writer in the first century. For a church to be restored it had to at one time exist. I can show Christian doctrine from writers in the first century that is still taught in churches today. Before the so called only true church fell off of the face of the earth didn't anybody record these beliefs?

It may surprise you to know that even the Book of Mormon does not teach many Mormon doctrines. Do not just take my word for it check it out for yourself.

Topic Index

http://www.nytimes.com/2012/06/13/opinion/im-a-mormon-not-a-christian.html?_r=0

The New York Times, The opinion pages, Op-Ed Contributor

I'm a Mormon, Not a Christian
By DAVID V. MASON
Published: June 12, 2012
THANKS to Mitt Romney, a Broadway hit and a relentless marketing campaign by the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Mormons seem to be everywhere.
This is the so-called Mormon Moment: a strange convergence of developments offering Mormons hope that the Christian nation that persecuted, banished or killed them in the 19th century will finally love them as fellow Christians.

I want to be on record about this. I'm about as genuine a Mormon as you'll find — a templegoer with a Utah pedigree and an administrative position in a congregation of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. I am also emphatically not a Christian.

For the curious, the dispute can be reduced to Jesus. Mormons assert that because they believe Jesus is divine, they are Christians by default. Christians respond that because Mormons don't believe — in accordance with the Nicene Creed promulgated in the fourth century — that Jesus is also the Father and the Holy Spirit, the Jesus that Mormons have in mind is someone else altogether. The Mormon reaction is incredulity. The Christian retort is exasperation. Rinse and repeat.

I am confident that I am not the only person — Mormon or Christian — who has had enough of the acrimonious niggling from both sides over the nature of the trinity, the authority of the creeds, the significance of grace and works, the union of Christ's divinity and humanity, and the real color of God's underwear. I'm perfectly happy not being a Christian. My Mormon fellows, most of whom will argue earnestly for their Christian legitimacy, will scream bloody murder that I don't represent them. I don't. They don't represent me, either. ……..
(End Quote)

Topic Index

Someone is sure to ask as they have in the past why are you picking on Mormons?

Why pick on Mormons?
I find it interesting that Mormon missionaries can go out in groves knocking on the doors of friends, family and neighbors. Then proceed to tell the story of Joseph Smith and one of the stories of his vision when going into the grove to pray.

They persist in repeating the story that all of the other churches are wrong and all of our creeds were declared as an abomination to God.

Then after years of doing this if anyone dares to turn the tables and show evidence of this fallacy they act as if they are being persecuted because some Christian stood up and said enough is enough and actually defended the Christian faith against Mormon claims.

Have I therefore become your enemy by telling you the truth? (Gal 4:16)

I did not knock on your door. I only placed a placed a page on the internet for those who may be interested. No one will force you to read my material. I am exercising my freedom of speech as an American by responding to Mormonism's attacks against my faith.

I do not dislike or hate Mormon people. Some of my friends and family are Mormons. I do however fear that if nobody speaks up many good people will remain eternally lost because of the deception of the Mormon Church.

How can I as a Christian stand idly by and allow this to happen? If I truly love my neighbor am I not obligated to tell them the truth if they are willing to listen?

I hope this note will help those who may be not understand why I would write against Mormonism.

You may also want to read: Why should a Christian defend their faith?

Topic Index

The Mormons claim to be the only true church. Furthermore we are told all Christian denominations at the time of Joseph Smith were an abomination to the Lord. Was God's church really gone from the face of the earth and restored through Joseph Smith as the Mormons claim? Well we will let the facts speak for themselves.

You can click on "LDS view of Christianity" to start reading at the beginning of this topic or use the page index to jump to the part that interest you most.

To see index for all topics on Mormonism click on "**Mormonism Index**" above

Overview of content in this section is as follows:

L.D.S. VIEW OF CHRISTIANITY (pg. 330)

All Other Churches Are Wrong (pg. 330)

Christian Denominations Sin by Rejecting Mormonism (pg. 330)

There Are Only Two Churches: The Church of God, & the Church of the Devil (pg.330)

Brigham Young's Challenge to Compare Mormonism to the Bible (pg. 331)

IS IT IMPORTANT WHAT A CHURCH TEACHES? (pg. 331)

Warning: About another Gospel (pg. 331)

Warning: About False Prophets (pg. 331)

Warning: About Another Jesus, Gospel, and Satan's Representatives (pg. 332)

Warning: About False Teachers (pg. 332)

Jesus' Words about Believing in Him (pg. 332)

Proverbs and A Way Which Seems Right, Yet Results in Death (pg. 333)

Joseph Fielding Smith Warns Mormons (pg. 333)

Harold B. Lee Challenges L.D.S. to a Defense of Faith (pg. 333)

Bruce R. McConkie Reminds L.D.S. of Jesus' Warning (pg. 333)

L.D.S. VIEW OF CHRISTIANITY

Joseph Smith History 1:18-19 (also called ***Joseph Smith 2*** and ***Pearl of Great Price***)

"18) **My object in going to inquire of the Lord was to know which of all the sects was right,** that I might know which to join. No sooner, therefore, did I get possession of myself, so as to be able to speak, than I asked the Personages who stood above me in the light, which of all the sects was right (for at this time it had never entered into my heart that all were wrong) — and which I should join.

"**19) I was answered that I must join none of them, for they were all wrong**; and the Personage who addressed me said that all their creeds were an abomination in his sight; that those professors were all corrupt; that: 'they draw near to me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me, they teach for doctrines the commandments of men, having a form of godliness, but they deny the power thereof.'" E **(PDF-LDS Scripture, pg, 919)**

Topic Index

Discourses of Brigham Young, p.319 - p.320 **(PDF pg. 510)**

(Mormon Prophet 1847-1877)

"There are, doubtless, millions of just as honest people among the several religious denominations as are amongst the professedly Latter-day Saints. But they have not the Gospel, they are in darkness with regard to the plan of salvation, and their teachers are blind guides, totally unable to give the people the living word, the way of life. If they live up to the best light and knowledge they have and can get, they are safe, and in a saved condition. **What is the sin of the ministry and people of the present Christian denominations? It is that light has come to them and they reject it**. The condemnation of the Jewish nation was that light had come into the world, but they chose darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil; so says the Savior. The same Gospel that Jesus taught to those who rejected him is entrusted to us to preach to the whole world with the same consequences which must reach them at some time, in some condition. 17:262." E5

Topic Index

Nephi 14:10 (***Book of Mormon***) **(PDF LDS Scripture pg. 46)**

"And he said unto me: '**Behold there are save two churches only; the one is the church of the Lamb of God, and the other is the church of the devil;** wherefore, whoso belongeth not to the church of the Lamb of God belongeth to that great church, which is the mother of abominations; and she is the whore of all the earth.'" E

As you have just read, the Mormon Church teaches that the various denominations that compose historic Christianity are all wrong, in sin, and of the devil. Furthermore, previous L.D.S. authorities have given us the challenge to examine Mormonism in light of the Bible and show them where there is any error.

By **Brigham Young** "Take up the Bible, compare the religion of the Latter-Day Saints with it and see if it will stand the test."[E9] (***Journal of Discourses,*** V16 pg. 46, 1873) **(PDF pg. 54)**

By **Brigham Young** "No man can disprove a truth...Why not rather every man rise up and say, 'Let God be true, let the truth remain and let me know the truth. That is what I want —I will submit to it; and let every false theory and principle fall, to rise up no more.'"[E9] (***Journal of Discourses,*** V8 pg. 132, 1860) **(PDF pg. 140)**

By **Orson Pratt** "If we cannot convince you by reason nor by the word of God, that your religion is wrong, we will not persecute you...we ask you the same generosity...convince us of our errors of doctrine, if we have any, by reason, by logical arguments, or by the word of God and we will be forever grateful for the information." [E12]
(***The Seer***, pg.15) **(PDF pg. 15)**

Topic Index

IS IT IMPORTANT WHAT A CHURCH TEACHES?
Galatians 1:8-9
"8) But even though we, or an angel from heaven, should preach to you a gospel contrary to that which we have preached to you, let him be accursed.9) As we have said before, so I say again now, if any man is preaching to you a gospel contrary to that which you received, let him be accursed."
Do you think Paul would consider it important what a prophet or anyone else taught? (verses 8 and 9)

Topic Index

Deuteronomy 13:1-5
"1) **If a prophet** or a dreamer of dreams arises among you and **gives you a sign or a wonder**, **and the sign or the wonder comes true**, concerning which he spoke to you, saying, **'Let us go after other gods** (whom you have not known) and let us serve them.' 3) **you shall not listen to the words of that prophet** or that dreamer of dreams; for the LORD your God is testing you to find out if you love the LORD your God will all your heart and with all your soul. 4) You shall follow the LORD your God and fear Him; and you shall keep His commandments, listen to His voice, serve Him, and cling to Him. 5) But that prophet or that dreamer of dreams shall be put to death, because he has counseled rebellion against the LORD your God who brought you from the land of Egypt and redeemed you from the house of slavery, to seduce you from the way in which the LORD your God commanded you to walk. So you shall purge the evil from among you."
What if the prophet can do miracles, but he tells us of other Gods; should we listen to him? (verses 1-3)
Does God take the matter of this prophet lightly? (verse 5)
If the teachings about God or Jesus are not the same Jesus or God as the Bible tells us about, is this following other gods?

2 Corinthians 11:3-15
"3) But I am afraid, lest as the serpent deceived Eve by his craftiness, your minds should be led astray from the simplicity and purity of devotion to Christ.4) For if one comes and **preaches another Jesus whom we have not preached**, or you receive a different spirit which you have not received, or **a different gospel** which you have not accepted, you bear this beautifully.5) For I consider myself not in the least inferior to the most eminent apostles.6) But even if I am unskilled in speech, yet I am not so in knowledge; in fact, in every way we have made this evident to you in all things.7) Or did I commit a sin in humbling myself that you might be exalted, because I preached the gospel of God to you without charge?8) I robbed other churches, taking wages from them to serve you;9) and when I was present with you and was in need, I was not a burden to anyone; for when the brethren came from Macedonia, they fully supplied my need, and in everything I kept myself from being a burden to you, and will continue to do so.10) As the truth of Christ is in me, this boasting of mine will not be stopped in the regions of Achaia.11) Why? Because I do not love you? God knows I do! 12) But what I am doing, I will continue to do, that I may cut off opportunity from those who desire an opportunity to be regarded just as we are in the matter about which they are boasting.**13) For such men are false apostles, deceitful workers, disguising themselves as apostles of Christ. 14) And no wonder, for even Satan disguises himself as an angel of light. 15) Therefore it is not surprising if his servants also disguise themselves as servants of righteousness; whose end shall be according to their deeds."**

Was Paul concerned about teachings of Jesus or the Gospel? (verses 3 and 4)
Can these false teachers appear as honest and religious people? (verses 13-15)
Why was Paul afraid for the Corinthians? (verse 3)
Why would Satan or his servants want to appear as servants of righteousness?

Topic Index

2 Peter 2:1
"But false prophets also arose among the people, just as **there will also be false teachers among you**, who will secretly **introduce destructive heresies**, even denying the Master who bought them, **bringing swift destruction upon themselves**."

Does Peter think that false teachings are a serious matter?

Topic Index
John 8:23-25
"And He was saying to them, 'You are from below, I am from above; you are of this world, I am not of this world. I said therefore to you, that you shall die in your sins; **for unless you believe that I am He, you shall die in your sins.'** And so they were saying to Him, 'Who are you?' Jesus said to them, 'What have I been saying to you from the beginning?'"

Does Jesus sound as if it might be important to believe correctly about Him?

Proverbs 14:12
"There is a way which seems right to a man, but its end is the way of death."

Is it wise to trust emotions or what may seem right?
After reading these verses, have you reached a conclusion as to whether or not it is important what a church teaches? Why do you suppose Satan would want to introduce false prophets or false teachings about who God or Jesus is? Do you believe that it important to know what the Bible says concerning who God or Jesus is? If the teachings of a church about who God or Jesus is are different than those of the Bible, should you attend and support that church? If the teachings of a church about the Gospel are different than that which we find in the New Testament, should you attend and support that church?

Following are some quotes, from L.D.S. writers, that you may also want to consider.
Topic Index

Joseph Fielding Smith, ***Gospel Doctrine***, pg.325 **(PDF pg. 345)**
"Many of our young people, and some older ones, too, are not familiar with their own religion nor with the beautiful and striking doctrines of the gospel with which it is so laden. This class devote more time to reading useless or sensational books than they do to the study and contemplation of works that would familiarize them with the principles of the gospel. **If they were better informed in this line, and understood the saving doctrines and every-day questions of their religion, more than they do, they would not be trapped by false teachings, false leaders, and advocates of cults that are false."** **E13**

Topic Index

Harold B. Lee, ***Stand Ye In Holy Places***, pg .359
"**The mission of this church is to bear witness of the truths of the gospel and put to flight the false teachings on every side** that are causing the restlessness and the aimlessness that threaten all who have not found the straight path and that which could be an anchor to their souls." **E14**

Topic Index

Bruce R. McConkie, ***The Mortal Messiah Vol. 2***, pgs. 192-193
We learned from Jesus as he sat on the Mount of Beatitudes, delivering his incomparable Sermon on the Mount that we should beware of false prophets — of the scribes and Pharisees, of the priests and Levites, who professed to be teachers and leaders and prophets but who were in fact ravening wolves in sheep's clothing. Though they wore the mantle of religious leadership, **their false teachings tore apart the spiritual well-being of their flocks."** **E15**

There are many L.D.S. doctrines that can be proven to be in error when contrasted with the Bible. However, there are some issues that are more important than others. One example is pre-existence and salvation. What difference does it make if someone believes in pre-existence or not, if they are lost because of a belief in a false Christ and a false Gospel? Obviously salvation is more important. I believe that the key issues should be the focal point before the minor issues when engaging in conversation concerning Mormon Doctrine.

The key issues are:
Was Joseph Smith a true prophet of God?
Does the L.D.S. church teach the truth about God, Jesus or the Holy Spirit?
Does the L.D.S. church teach the true Gospel?
The L.D.S. Standard Works

Topic Index

The Bible warns us about false prophets. Joseph Smith claimed to be a prophet of God and he is the founder of the Mormon Church. Joseph Smith made a number of false prophecies. Three such false prophecies are examined here.

You can click on **"The Prophet Joseph Smith"** to start reading at the beginning of this topic or use the page index to jump to the part that interest you most.

To see index for all topics on Mormonism click on "**Mormonism Index**" above

Overview of content in this section is as follows:

The prophet Joseph Smith (pg. 336)

Overview of content in this section is as follows:

How to tell a true prophet from a false prophet (pg. 336)

Bruce McConkie says that if Joseph Smith was a false prophet then Mormonism is wrong. (p 338)

Paul F. Royall says L.D.S should prove to themselves Joseph Smith was a prophet. (pg. 338)

The great soldiers of the Cross have been gathered from the highlands of adversity. (pg. 339)

False Prophecies (pg. 339)

The prophet Joseph Smith & the Civil War (pg. 339)

The prophet Joseph Smith & the Missouri Temple (pg. 343)

The prophet Joseph Smith & the 56 year (pg. 347)

THE PROPHET JOSEPH SMITH

There are people who have made some remarkable predictions, yet they are not prophets of God. Nostradamus is credited for making some amazing predictions, and he did not claim to be a prophet of God. There are those that have claimed to be a prophet of God and have started a religion. Charles Taze Russell claimed to be a prophet of God; he founded the Jehovah's Witnesses church known today as the Watch Tower Society. The informed Mormon and Christian would agree that Russell was not a prophet of God, nor did he found "the true church". What separates a true prophet of God from a false prophet, and is it important to distinguish the difference?

Topic Index

If a religion advocates that you follow a god other than the God of the Bible, it is a false religion (Deuteronomy 13:1-10). When we look to the Bible we can soon learn how to distinguish a false prophet from a true prophet. We are also told why it is important to know the difference.

Matthew 7:21-23

> "21) Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord' will enter the kingdom of heaven; but he who does the will of My Father who is in heaven. 22) **Many will says to Me on that day, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in Your name, and in Your name cast out demons, and in Your name perform many miracles?'** 23) **And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from Me.'**"

In these verses we see that there are those who prophesy in Jesus' name, and even perform miracles in His name, but those things in and of themselves do not mean that they are from God!

Acts 3:22-23

> "22) Moses said, 'The Lord God shall raise up for you a prophet like me from your brethren; to Him you shall give heed in everything He says to you. 23) And if shall be that every soul that does not heed that prophet shall be utterly destroyed from among the people.'"

In this passage we can see why it would be important to distinguish a false prophet from a true one. It certainly does not sound wise to ignore what someone has to say, if they really are a prophet of God.

Deuteronomy 18:18-22

> "18) I will raise up a prophet from among their countrymen like you, and I will put My words in his mouth, and he shall speak to them all that I command him. 19) And it shall come about that whoever will not listen to My words which he shall speak in My name, I Myself will require it of him.20) But the prophet who shall speak a word presumptuously in My name which I have not commanded him to speak, or which he shall speak in the name of other gods, that prophet shall die. 21) **And you may say in your heart, 'How shall we know the word which the LORD has not spoken?'**22)**When a prophet speaks in the name of the LORD, if the thing does not come about or come true, that is the thing which the LORD has not spoken. The prophet has spoken it presumptuously; you shall not be afraid of him."**

In verses 18-19 we see that we should listen to a true prophet, or answer to God for it.

In verses 21 and 22, we see that it is easy to tell the difference from a true prophet from a false one. If he is a true prophet and he tells us something about the future it will come to pass. There is no mention of any exceptions; one false prophecy makes a false prophet.

As we can see in verse 20, God does not take the matter of false prophets lightly. One might ask how God can judge the false prophet so harshly. The answer is because a false prophet is claiming that God said something that he knows God did not say. God Himself is the one that causes the prophecy to come true. Man, when he is involved, is only an instrument that God uses. Following is some Scripture that shows this.

Ezekiel 12:25

> "'For I the LORD shall speak, and whatever word I speak will be performed. It will no longer be delayed, for in your days, O rebellious house, **I shall speak the word and perform it,' declares the Lord GOD."**

Habakkuk 2:2-3

> "Then the LORD answered me and said, 'Record the vision and inscribe it on tablets, that the one who reads it may run. For the vision is yet for the appointed time; it hastens toward the goal, and **it will not fail.** Though it tarries, wait for it; for **it will certainly come,** it will not delay.'"

This Scripture shows that the Lord is the one that fulfills the prophecy and the fulfillment of it is certain. We know that God does not lie, and nothing is too hard for Him (Hebrews 6:18, Jeremiah 32:27).

L.D.S. scripture also tells us that the Lord fulfills the prophecy and the fulfillment is certain.

D&C 1:38

> "What I the Lord have spoken, I have spoken, and I excuse not myself; and though the heavens and the earth pass away, my word shall not pass away, but shall all be fulfilled, whether by mine own voice or by the voice of my servants, it is the same."[E] **(PDF LDS Scripture pg. 570)**

Topic Index

It is interesting to me that many Protestants will willingly enough put the prophecies of Joseph Smith to the test, yet many Mormons are not willing to do so — either because they do not believe it is important, or they think it is wrong to do so. Following are a couple of statements from L.D.S. authors that show that it is important to establish that Joseph Smith was a prophet of God.

Bruce R. McConkie, ***A New Witness for the Articles of Faith***, p.13

> "Conversely, if Joseph Smith was not called of God, if he was a fraud and an impostor, if he was a false prophet — then Mormonism, as the restored gospel is often called, is itself a fraud and a delusion. In that event we as a people are in as dark, as benighted, and as fallen a state as the rest of mankind. And thus the issue is squarely put. Joseph Smith either was a prophet or he was not. He was either a revealer of Christ and God and their saving truths or he was not. His work on earth was either for good or for ill. There is no middle ground, no gray area, no room for compromise." **E16**

Topic Index

Paul F. Royall, ***BYU Speeches***, December 17, 1963, p.4

> **"Joseph Smith was either a prophet of God, or be was a fraud**. There is no halfway mark about him. He was either what he claimed he was, or he was the greatest prevaricator that this world has ever known. **I say that it is expedient for each of us to prove to ourselves whether he was a prophet or whether he was a fraud."** **E17**

Of course there are still those Mormons who say, "I already believe Joseph Smith was a prophet, so what need is there for me to put his prophecies to the test?" I say to them that the more I have studied even what I already believed, the more it has increased my faith. I can honestly say that my faith in God and His word has increased greatly by sharing this faith with people who have opposing views. The truth will endure all tests, and through opposition faith is strengthened. Take to heart what was said in the following L.D.S. Conference Report.

Bryant S. Hinckley, ***Conference Report***, April 1939, p.62

> **"John Taylor, Wilford Woodruff, Brigham Young, Heber C. Kimball, Willard Richards,** and many others were given the opportunity, not only to prove their loyalty to the Prophet, but to prove their fidelity to the truth. These men were tried in the crucible of affliction. Spurgeon once said:
>
> **'The great soldiers of the Cross have been gathered from the highlands of adversity.'** It was true in those early days of our history. Those people were winnowed and sifted by the winds of adversity, until nothing but the wheat was left." **E18**

Topic Index

Next we will examine three prophecies by Joseph Smith. Your job is to decide if he was a true or false prophet. If you decide that the prophecies are not false, then you must be able to explain how you can justify them as being true.

FALSE PROPHECIES

JOSEPH SMITH AND THE CIVIL WAR

First I would like you to look at the Civil War prophecy carefully and see if it was intended to be divided into time frames of the (1) Civil War (2) World War 1&2

The second coming of Christ. This is the way the L.D.S authorities have interpreted it so that it was not a false prophecy. I suggest to you that to interpret this prophecy in such a manner is not being true to the context!

To help see the problem with this type of interpretation I have tried to mark where a time frame must take place for this to be true.

Date: December 25, 1832 D&C 87:1-8 (PDF- L.D.S Scripture pg. 730)
1 Verily, **thus saith the Lord** concerning the wars that will shortly come to pass, **beginning at the rebellion of South Carolina**, which will eventually terminate in the death and misery of many souls; (Time Change)

2 And the time will come that **war will be poured out upon all nations**, (Time Change) **beginning at this place.**

3 For behold, the Southern States shall be divided against the Northern States, and the Southern States will call on other nations, even the nation of Great Britain, as it is called, and they shall also call upon other nations, in order to defend themselves against other nations;(Time Change) and then **war shall be poured out upon all nations.** (Time Change)

4 And it shall come to pass, after many days, slaves shall rise up against their masters, who shall be marshaled and disciplined for war.
5 And it shall come to pass also that the remnants who are left of the land will marshal themselves, and shall become exceedingly angry, and shall vex the Gentiles with a sore vexation.

(Time Change)
6 And thus, with the sword and by bloodshed the inhabitants of the earth shall mourn; and with famine, and plague, and earthquake, and the thunder of heaven, and the fierce and vivid lightning also, shall the inhabitants of the earth be made to feel the wrath, and indignation, and chastening hand of an Almighty God, **until the consumption decreed hath made a full end of all nations;**

7 That the cry of the saints, and of the blood of the saints, shall cease to come up into the ears of the Lord of Sabaoth, from the earth, to be avenged of their enemies.

8 Wherefore, stand ye in holy places, and be not moved, until the day of the Lord come; for behold, it cometh quickly, **saith the Lord**. Amen.

To interpret this prophecy in the manner that the L.D.S authorities have explained it to us, including World Wars I and II, we have to change time frames at least six times in only eight verses. As you can see in verse 2 this must even take place in the middle of the sentence. Another thing to consider is the fact that although we call two of these wars "world wars" we would not say every nation was involved. How would you divide these eight verses to fit the L.D.S authority's interpretation? Is it possible to do this and be true to the context? I don't thinks so! [E]

I cannot find any wording in the context of this passage that would suggest that it was intended to be interpreted in these time frames— if such words exist, can you show me which ones they are? How can you explain "time frame jumping" within one verse? Verse 1(a) addressed the Civil War ; then the start of verse 2(b) jumps ahead to the World Wars, and (c) is back at the Civil War by the end of the verse.

The passage both begins and ends with "saith the Lord". Do you think this was intended to be a prophecy, or is it merely Joseph Smith's opinion?

According to verses 1 and 2, war was to be “poured out on all nations”, beginning at what place? Did this happen in the Civil War time period?

If you are true to the context, when should there be a “full end to all nations”?

Is this a true or false prophecy? How should you respond according to the Bible (Deuteronomy 18:18-22)?

Herber Kimball, a member of the first presidency, made the following statement (keep in mind that the Civil War took place from 1861-1865):

Journal of Discourses, Vol. 9, pgs.54-55, **(PDF pg. 62-63)**
Heber C. Kimball, April 14, 1861

> “There are many good books for you to read, and that are full of good instruction. Here are the ***Bible***, the ***Book of Mormon***, and ***Book of Doctrine and Covenants***. You will see many revelations in the last-named book that are already fulfilled, and there are others that are still in the future. The Almighty through his Prophets foretold that the nation would make war upon this people and that he would come out of his hiding place, and pour out his judgments upon those that rebel against him, and who persecuted his people, and set themselves against his house. Then it shall go forth like a mighty whirlwind upon the face of the whole earth. **In this country the North and the South will exert themselves against each other, and ere long the whole face of the United States will be in commotion, fighting one against another, and they will destroy their nationality.** They have never done anything for this people, and I don't believe they ever will. I have never prayed for the destruction of this Government, but I know that dissolution, sorrow, weeping, and distress are in store for the inhabitants of the United States, because of their conduct towards the people of God. Then the judgments will go forth to the nations of the earth. I have an understanding of these things, and I sincerely hope that you comprehend as clearly as I do. If you do, you will strive to prepare for those things that are coming upon the earth in these last days.” **E9**

Does it sound like Herber Kimball understood that the Civil War prophecy was to be fulfilled at that time, when he said" and they will destroy their nationality"?

Even if you interpret this prophecy as something that was to take place during one time period, as I believe it was intended(making it a false prophecy),one would still wonder about the parts of the prophecy that did come true. I am referring to the fact that the Civil War did take place, and it did begin in South Carolina. How could Joseph Smith have known that before it happened? It might not be as amazing as you think if you take a look at what was happening in history at the time of his prophecy.

Tension between the North and the South was bad enough that John Quincy Adams (then Secretary of State) predicted Civil War twelve years earlier than Joseph Smith did. The following can be found in the ***L.D.S. Collectors Library*** under the bonus title:
American History; An Apprehensive View of the Missouri Compromise.

AUTHOR: Thomas Jefferson
DATE: 1820
SOURCE: ***America, Vol.5***, pg.305
[THE Missouri Compromise was the first of the great measures that followed the spirit of mutual accommodation found in the Constitution itself. It was an arrangement between the free and slave States, embodied in an Act of Congress approved March 6, 1820, which provided for the admission of Missouri into the Union as a slave State, but which prohibited slavery in all other Louisiana territory north of the southern boundary line of Missouri.

Jefferson betrays both apprehension and alarm for the future of the Union, in these three letters written in **1820**. It is the Southern view of a lukewarm slave holder. Following it is the Northern view taken from the journal of **John Quincy Adams**, then (1820) Secretary of State. **His prophecy of civil war**, in the third paragraph, was fulfilled in 1861. Niles, whose moderate view follows, founded (1815) and edited ***Niles' Weekly Register***, the files of which are an invaluable record of contemporary events.] **E19**

Still this leaves the fact that Joseph Smith stated that the rebellion would begin in South Carolina. This is what a lot of people would have expected at that time. Before Joseph Smith's prophecy Congress passed a tariff act that South Carolina refused to accept and President Andrew Jackson alerted the troops to be ready for war. The following can be found in the ***L.D.S. Collectors Library*** (bonus title).

History of the American People, Vol.4, pgs .36-37

> "The election over, General Jackson once more chosen, her party ties broken, her principles of opposition still unsanctioned and untested, South Carolina proceeded with her radical program of redress. **On the 24th of November (1832)** a state convention, summoned for the purpose and formed upon the model of a constitutional convention, adopted and promulgated a formal Ordinance of Nullification, which declared the tariff Acts of 1828 and 1832 null and void and without force of law within the jurisdiction of **South Carolina, and gave solemn warning to the rest of the country that any attempt on the part of the federal government to enforce the nullified laws within her limits would sever South Carolina's connection with the Union and force her to organize a separate government.** The legislature of the State immediately took steps looking towards a resumption of some of the powers before formally surrendered to the Union, and provided for **putting the State in readiness to resist coercion by force of arms**. Mr. Hayne was recalled from Washington to become governor of the State; and Mr. Calhoun resigned the vice presidency to take his place upon the floor of the Senate, that he might, there contest every inch of the ground in debate." **E19**

In summary, the Civil War prophecy by Joseph Smith did not come true. War was not poured out on all nations, beginning at South Carolina. There also was not an end to all nations. The part that Joseph Smith did get right was common knowledge to the people at that time.

Topic Index

THE PROPHET JOSEPH SMITH and the MISSOURI TEMPLE

Let's start by examining just what Joseph Smith prophesied concerning the temple in the western boundaries of Missouri.

Date: September 22 and 23, 1832
Place : Kirtland, Ohio
To: Joseph Smith and Six Elders
D&C 84:1-5 **(PDF L.D.S Scripture pg. 719)**

> "1) **A revelation of Jesus Christ unto his servant Joseph Smith**, Jun., and six elders, as they united their hearts and lifted their voices on high.2) Yea, the word of the Lord concerning his church, established in the last days for the restoration of his people, as he has spoken by the mouth of his prophets, and for the gathering of his saints to stand upon Mount Zion, which shall be the city of New Jerusalem. 3) **Which city shall be built, beginning at the temple lot, which is appointed by the finger of the Lord, in the western boundaries of the State of Missouri, and dedicated by the hand of Joseph Smith, Jun.,** and others with whom the Lord was well pleased. 4) Verily this is the word of the Lord that the city New Jerusalem shall be built by the gathering of the saints, beginning at this place, even the place of the temple, which **temple shall be reared in this generation**. 5) For verily **this generation shall not all pass away until an house shall be built unto the Lord,** and a cloud shall rest upon it, which cloud shall be even the glory of the Lord, which shall fill the house." [E]

Questions about ***D&C*** 84:1-5

Verse 1. Through what man did this prophecy come?

Verse 2. Was this intended to be just a hope of Joseph Smith's, or was it to be a word from the Lord?

Verse 3. Where was this city and temple to be built, and by whose hand will it be dedicated?

Verse 4. When was this city and temple to be built?

Verse 5. This prophecy was given in 1832; was it that generation that "should not all pass away" until the city and temple were to be built in western Missouri and dedicated by the Hand of Joseph Smith? If this is not the correct interpretation, where in the text do you see a change in time frames? There was not a city or temple built in that generation in western Missouri. Does this make it a false prophecy, according to Deuteronomy 18:18-22?

This is a question that the Tenth President Joseph Fielding Smith addressed:

Answers to Gospel Questions, Vol.4, p.112

"It may be reasonable to assume that in giving this revelation to the Prophet the Lord did have in mind the generation of people who would still be living within the one hundred years from the time of the announcement of the revelation, and that they would enjoy the blessings of the temple, and a glorious cloud would rest upon it. It is also reasonable to believe that no soul living in 1832 is still living in morality on the earth. Notwithstanding this there is nothing in the commandment given to Nephi, neither in his assurance that the Lord would bless him in obtaining the plates that were so essential to the welfare spiritually and temporally of the descendants of Nephi, that in any sense is in conflict with the commandment or promise that was made by the Lord in the revelation given to the Prophet Joseph Smith. We read in another revelation given to the Church in January 1841, where the Lord absolves the members of the Church from the obligation of building the temple, in the following words

'A REVELATION FROM THE LORD

'Verily, verily I say unto you that when I give a commandment to any of the sons of men to do work unto my name, and those sons of men go with all their might and with all they have to perform that work, and cease not their diligence, and their enemies come upon them and hinder them from performing that work, behold, it behooveth med to require that work no more at the hands of those sons of men, but to accept of their offerings.

'And the iniquity and transgressions of my holy laws and commandments I will visit upon the heads of those who hinder my work unto the third and fourth generation, so long as they repent not, and hate me, saith the Lord.

'Therefore, for this cause have I accepted the offerings of those whom I commanded to build up a city and a house unto my name, in Jackson county, Missouri, and were hindered by their enemies, saith the Lord your God.

'And I will answer judgment, wrath, and indignation, wailing and anguish, and gnashing of teeth upon their heads, unto the third and fourth generation, so long as they repent not, and hate me, saith the Lord your God. And this, I make an example unto you, for your consolation concerning all those who have been commanded to do a work and have been hindered by the hands of their enemies, and by oppression, saith the Lord your God.

'For I am the Lord your God, and will save all those of your brethren who have been pure in heart, and have been slain in the land of Missouri, saith the Lord.'" (End Quote)

There are a few problems with this prophecy that this president quoted (***D&C*** 124:49-54) or (L.D.S- Scripture PDF pg. 815-816) which should be addressed. First, this is said as a word from the Lord that was relayed to us by Joseph Smith on January 19, 1841, in Nauvoo, Illinois. The original prophecy concerning the Temple that was to be built in the western part of Missouri took place in September, 1832 — nine years earlier. By this time Joseph Smith was very well aware of the fact that he could not go to Missouri, and certainly he could not build a city and a temple there. This "prophecy" appears to be a message of convenience, a way to get Joseph Smith "off the hook "with those who would still inquire about when they would go to Missouri to build the city and temple.

There is a strong contrast between this message, which excuses them for not building the temple because they "tried with all of their might", and what Joseph Smith's friend believed when only three years had elapsed since his prophecy. John Whitmer is one of the eight witnesses who are mentioned in the preface of the ***Book*** **(PDF pg. 194)** ***of Mormon.*** The following can be found in a Mormon publication he authored.

Messenger and Advocate (Sept. 1835)
"Cleanliness", by John Whitmer; pg. 189

*"The Lord has said that he would hold no one guilty, that should go with an open heart, up to the land of Zion; after five years from September, 1831. And the Lord has said that he would gather his people and specified the place where:[***D&C** *84:1-4] A revelation of Jesus Christ unto his servant Joseph Smith Jr. and six elders, as they united their heart and lifted their voices on high; yea, the word of the Lord concerning his church established in the last days for the gathering of his saints to stand upon mount Zion, which shall be built, beginning at the Temple Lot, which is appointed by the finger of the Lord, in the western boundaries of the State of Missouri, and dedicated by the hand of Joseph Smith jr. and others, with whom the Lord was well pleased.*

*'**Verily, this is the word of the Lord, that the city New Jerusalem shall be built by the gathering of the saints, beginning at this place, even the place of the temple, which temple shall be reared in this generation; for verily this generation shall not all pass away until an house shall be built unto the Lord and a cloud shall rest upon it, which cloud shall be even the glory of the Lord, which shall fill the house** (Cov. Sec. IV. Par. I.). Isaiah 66:18 For I know thier works and thier thoughts: it shal come, that I will gather all nations and tongues; and they shall come,and see my glory"'*

According to this quotation the glory of the Lord shall appear; but they must come to a certain place in order that they can see it. Our former quotation determines the place, and **who dare dispute it? The Lord has said by the mouth of Isaiah; that he would perform his work, his strange work; and bring to pass his act, his strange act**." [E20] (End Quote)

At this point it was still believed that the temple would be built during that generation and dedicated by the hand of Joseph Smith. More important is the contrast between the nature of the God in ***D&C***124; 49-54 and the God mentioned in the Bible. The God we learn of in the Bible declares that He Himself will see to it that His prophets' prophecies will come to pass, and nothing is too hard for Him. Scripture previously quoted showing this included Ezekiel 12:12-25, Habakkuk 2:2-3, Hebrews 6:18, and Jeremiah 32:27; also ***D&C*** 1:38

In contrast the God we learn of in ***D&C*** 124 excuses the people for not fulfilling the prophecy Joseph Smith gave concerning the building of the temple, because "they tried with all of their might" (verse 49). I ask you by whose power a prophecy is fulfilled; is it by God's power, or man's? Does your answer line up with what the Bible says? (References above)

The passage quoted in ***D&C*** **124:49-54** is in conflict with the nature of God presented in the Bible. In the Bible we are told how to identify a false prophet. The test, we are told, is that if a prophet tells us of future events and they do not come to pass, the prophet was false. The only exception we are ever given in the Bible concerns when coming judgment is stopped due to repentance; Jonah and Nineveh would be examples of this. ***D&C*** says that although the prophecy did not come to pass, the people are excused because they "tried with all of their might".

It is not reasonable to accept Joseph Smith's word for what Smith says the Lord said in ***D&C*** **124:49-54**, when Smith has already proven to be a false prophet, according to the Bible. This section in ***D&C*** was clearly a prophecy of convenience for Joseph Smith; he was trying to conceal his own false prophecy with another so-called word from the Lord. It only takes one false prophecy to become a false prophet.

THE PROPHET JOSEPH SMITH and the 56 YEARS

History of the Church, Vol.2, Ch.13, pg.181 **(PDF pg. 957)**
Kirtland, February 14, 1835—

"This day, a meeting was called of those who journeyed last season to Zion for the purpose of laying the foundation of its redemption, together with as many other of the brethren and sisters as were disposed to attend.

"President Joseph Smith, Jun., presiding, read the 15th chapter of John, and said: Let us endeavor to solemnize our minds that we may receive a blessing, by calling on the Lord. After an appropriate and affecting prayer, the brethren who went to Zion [in Zion's camp] were requested to take their seats together in a part of the house by themselves.

"President Smith then stated that the meeting had been called, because God had commanded it; and it was made known to him by vision and by the Holy Spirit. He then gave a relation of some of the circumstances attending us while journeying to Zion— our trials, sufferings; and said God had not designed all this for nothing, but He had it in remembrance yet; and it was the will of God that those who went to zion, with a determination to lay down their lives, if necessary, should be ordained to the ministry, and go forth to prune the vineyard for the last time, or the coming of the Lord, which was nigh--even fifty-six years should wind up the scene.

"The President also said many things; such as the weak things, even the smallest and weakest among us, shall be powerful and mighty, and great things shall be accomplished by you from this hour; and you shall begin to feel the whisperings of the Spirit of God; and the work of God shall begin to break forth from this time; and you shall be endowed with power from on high." **E7**

In this text we can see that Joseph Smith was the one leading this meeting and the quotes in this section are things he said. We also learn that God has called the meeting, and the things mentioned in the meeting are not just an opinion or estimation. Rather the things mentioned in the meeting were made known to Smith by revelation and by the Holy Spirit. We learn that the people who went to Zion were in the meeting. We learn that the people who went to Zion were the ones who were to go and prune the vineyard for the last time. We learn that the pruning of the vineyard (or the coming of the Lord) should come about within fifty-six years.

Collected Discourses, Vol.5, Francis M. Lyman,
April 5, 1896

"On that day also the Prophet announced that they were to be called into the ministry and to go forth to prune the vineyard for the last time, 'for the coming of the Lord, which is nigh, even fifty-six years should wind up the scene.' The harvest was ripe, and the laborers were few, and they were to cast in their might and their labors for the accomplishment of the purposes of the Lord; and he announced, at that time, that in fifty-six years the scene should be wound up, that some scene was to be wound up in 1891 —fifty-six years added to 1835. And thus many of the older brethren were expecting to discover something in 1891 that perhaps it has been felt has not been accomplished.

"..... **In the culmination of these events we recognize the fulfillment of the prediction of the Prophet Joseph Smith, that about 1890 or 1891, the scene would change, and the conditions that had existed from those early days of persecutions and troubles should be wound up and cease forever.** The Prophets Brigham Young and John Taylor laid down their lives while carrying forward the great work, though it was not their good fortune to witness the relief and the independence and the measure of sovereignty of statehood that the people of this state enjoy today. But after that time when the Lord had indicated that the scene should change, and the winding up of the conditions that had formerly existed, from that time till now, everything has moved in harmony with the directions and counsels of the Lord through His servants. Think of the change of feeling from hostility to friendliness in the people of the United States toward the people of this state. We not only have the governor and judges of our own choice, and courts organized here in this state, but we have our senators in congress, and our representative, and they are as honored and equally influential as are those of any other state in the Union; and the Lord has magnified His people and **verified the prophesy of His servant Joseph in regard to this great change. Is it not clear that the inspiration in the Prophet Joseph at that time indicated and pointed to the conditions that we see today?** The scene is changed, and it has changed to remain, and will never return to the old conditions again." [E22]

After reading what Joseph Smith said in the meeting, and a related passage by Lyman, some logical questions come to mind:

The meeting was commanded by God and the contents of the meeting were made known to Joseph Smith by revelation and by the Holy Spirit. Considering this, and the fact that Francis M. Lyman called this a "prophecy", why shouldn't we view it as such? Was there anything in the context of what Joseph Smith said in the meeting to justify Lyman's interpretation of the fifty-six years as being a change in persecution and political parties,

How can the fifty-six years be taken as only an "opinion" when the text says these things were made known to Joseph Smith by revelation and by the Holy Spirit?

Isn't the “pruning of the vineyard for the last time” a reference to the harvesting of souls, similar to what Jesus said in Matthew 9:37-38 and 13:36-39? If so, why would the harvest be for the last time unless the Lord was expected to return? Is not this harvest still taking place today?

Joseph Smith did make other statements on other occasions that seem contrary to his prophecy that Christ should return in fifty-six years. This does not change the fact that in the meeting held on February 14, 1835, Joseph Smith did say that the pruning of the vineyard and the coming of the Lord should be wound up in fifty-six years. This was supposedly made known to him by revelation, and by the Holy Spirit.

> Joseph Smith prophesied the return of Christ within fifty-six years. [E7] (***History of the Church Vol.2***, Ch.13, pgs.181-182.)[E7] **(PDF pg. 957)**

> Joseph Smith said, "I prophesy in the name of the Lord God, and let it be written — the Son of Man will not come in the clouds of heaven till I am eighty-five years old**.”** [E7] **(*History of the Church, Vol.5***, Ch.17, pg.336.) **(PDF pg. 2864)**

> Joseph Smith said after praying to know when Christ would return, he heard a voice; and after hearing it he said, “I was left thus, without being able to decide whether this coming referred to the beginning of the millennium or to some previous appearing, or whether I should die and thus see His face. [E7]"**(*History of the Church, Vol.5***, Ch.17, pg.324.) **(PDF pg. 2854)**

> Joseph Smith said, "**Jesus Christ never did reveal to any man the precise time that He would come**. Go and read the Scriptures, and you cannot find anything that specifies the exact hour He would come; and **all that say so are false teachers."** [E7] (***History of the Church, Vol. 6***, Ch.10, pg.254.) **(PDF pg. 2317)**

How can these four statements be reconciled? They are contradictory, and from a man who claims he is relaying God’s word to us? Considering the facts; it is not reasonable to accept Smith as a prophet of God.

When looking at statements by Joseph Smith as historical documents, it is helpful to know how those around him understood what he meant. Following are some sources that show that those who listened to and believed Joseph Smith fully expected to see Christ return in their lifetime.

History of the Church, Vol. 1, pg.176, Footnotes **(PDF pg. 421)**

> "In addition to the spiritual manifestations already mentioned as having occurred at this conference of June 3rd-6th it should be said that according to John Whitmer's ***History of the Church*** (ch. v): '**The Spirit of the Lord fell upon Joseph** in an unusual manner, and **he prophesied** that John the Revelator was then among the Ten Tribes of Israel who had been led away by Shalmaneser king of Assyria to prepare them for their return from their long dispersion to again possess the land of their fathers. He prophesied many more things that I have not written After he had prophesied he laid his hands upon Lyman Wight and ordained him to the High Priesthood (i.e. ordained him a High Priest), after the holy order of God. **And the Spirit fell upon**
> **Lyman and he prophesied concerning the coming of Christ. He said that there were some in the congregation that should live until the Savior should descend from heaven with a shout, with all the holy angels with Him.**'" **E7**

Soon after Joseph Smith ordained Lyman Wight to the office of High Priest, Lyman prophesied that some people there would be alive when Christ returned. Why is there no record of Joseph Smith rebuking him, since Smith had already declared that "no man knows when Jesus will return"? Lyman Wight gave a false prophecy right after the Spirit of the Lord fell upon Joseph Smith and Smith ordained Lyman a High Priest.

History of the Church, Vol.1, Ch.23, pg.323 **(PDF pg. 277)**

> "I asked of him a father's blessing, which he granted by laying his hands upon my head, in the name of Jesus Christ, and declaring that **I should continue in the Priest's office until Christ comes."** **E7**

The blessing was that this man should continue in the Priest's office until Christ comes. If this continuation of the Priest's office still holds after his death why does it end upon the return of Christ? Or could it be that it was believed that this man would live until the return of Christ, due to Joseph Smith's prophecy?

History of the Church, Vol.2, Ch.13, pgs. 186-189 **(PDF pg. 960)**

"**President Joseph Smith, Jun**., said that the first business of the meeting was, for the Three Witnesses of the Book of Mormon, to pray, each one, and then proceed to choose twelve men from the Church, as Apostles, to go to all nations, kindreds, tongues, and people. The Three Witnesses were then blessed by the laying on of the hands of the Presidency. The Witnesses then, according to a former commandment, proceeded to make choice of the Twelve. Their names are as follows:

1, Lyman E. Johnson
Brigham Young
Heber C. Kimball
Orson Hyde
David W. Patten
Luke S. Johnson
William E. M'Lellin
John F. Boynton
Orson Pratt
William Smith
Thomas P. Marsh
Parley P. Pratt

"Lyman E. Johnson, Brigham Young and Heber C. Kimball came forward; and the Three Witnesses laid their hands upon each one's head and prayed, separately.
"**The blessing of Lyman E. Johnson was, in the name of Jesus Christ**, that he should bear the tidings of salvation to nations, tongues, and people, until the utmost corners of the earth shall hear the tidings; and that he shall be a witness of the things of God to nations and tongues, and that holy angels shall administer to him occasionally; and that no power of the enemy shall prevent him from going forth and doing the work of the Lord; and that **he shall live until the gathering is accomplished**, according to the holy prophets; and he shall be like unto Enoch; and his faith shall be like unto his; and he shall be called great among all the living; and Satan shall tremble before him; and **he shall see the Savior come and stand upon the earth with power and great glory.** "..... **Heber C. Kimball's blessing was**, in substance, that he shall be made like unto those who have been blessed before him; and be favored with the same blessing. That he might receive visions; the ministration of angels, and hear their voice; and even come into the presence of God; that many millions may be converted by his instrumentality; that angels may waft him from place to place, and **that he may stand unto the coming of our Lord,** and receive a crown in the Kingdom of our God; that he be made acquainted with the day when Christ shall come; that he shall be made perfect in faith; and that the deaf shall hear, the lame shall walk, the blind shall see, and greater things than these shall he do; that he shall have boldness of speech before the nations, and great power.". [E7] (End Quote)

Again in this quote, we see that Joseph Smith is present when the Lord's work is taking place and Heber C. Kimball and Lyman E. Johnson both said they would live to see the Second Coming of Christ. How can we possibly say that Joseph Smith did not put a date to the return of Christ? Certainly those who were close to him believed they would be alive when Christ returned. By Joseph Smith's own words, this makes him a false teacher.

History of the Church, Vol.6, Ch.10, pg.254 **(PDF pg. 2317)**

> "**Jesus Christ never did reveal to any man the precise time that He would come**. Go and read the Scriptures, and you cannot find anything that specifies the exact hour He would come; and **all that say so are false teachers**." [E7]

So far we can conclude that Joseph Smith did indeed prophesy the return of Christ within fifty-six years. Some of those who were close to him believed they would also live to see the return of Christ. These events were recorded supposedly while doing the Lord's work. Joseph Smith also made contradicting statements that cannot be reconciled. Robert A. Morey wrote book entitled ***How to Answer a Mormon;*** the majority of this 119-page book concerns false prophecies by Joseph Smith. I only mentioned three here. Remember, it only takes ***one false prophecy*** to be a ***false prophet***. The most thorough book I ever seen is Mormonism Shadow or Reality by Sandra and Jerald Tanner. http://utlm.org/

Topic Index

Mormons have a different God and Jesus than the one found in your bible. There are strong warnings in the bible about this. In this study we will compare both the Christian God and the Mormon God with the Bible.

You can click on A Different God To start reading at the beginning of this topic or use the topic index to jump to the part that interest you most.

To see index for all topics on Mormonism click on "**Mormonism Index**" above

Overview of content in this section is as follows:

A DIFFERENT GOD (pg. 355)
We Should Not Listen to Prophets who follow False Gods

Mormon View:
Mormonism Declares Three Gods in Godhead (pg. 355)
Mormonism Declares That God was A Man Who Became a God (pg. 356)
Mormonism Declares God the Father Has Flesh-and-Bone Body (pg. 356)

Christian View:
God Has Always Been God (pg. 356)
There is only One God (pg. 356)
God Does Not Change (pg. 357)
God the Father Does Not Have Flesh-and-Bone Body (pg. 357)

Conflicting Mormon Views:
Book of Mormon Says God is Spirit (pg. 358)
Book of Mormon Says There Are No Other Gods (pg. 358)
Brigham Young Taught that Adam was God (pg. 358)
Brigham Young's Words Regarded the Same as Scripture (pg. 359)

A Different God Index continues next page.

A DIFFERENT JESUS (pg. 359)

Mormon View:

Jesus is our Elder Brother (pg. 360)
Lucifer is the Brother of Jesus (pg. 360)
Jesus is the Firstborn Spirit Child of the Father (pg. 361)
Christ Gained Exaltation (ecame God) (pg. 3 1)
All Men Were Born Sons of God in the Spirit (pg. 361)

Christ was begotten by an Immortal Father in the same way mortal men are begotten by mortal Fathers (pg. 362)

Christian View:

Jesus Created Angels, Including Lucifer (pg. 362)
Jesus Has Always Been God (pg. 363)
Jesus was a Miraculous Conception; A Virgin Gave Birth by the Power of the Holy Spirit (p.364)
The Jesus of Mormonism was born at Jerusalem (pg. 364)
The Jesus of the Bible was born in Bethlehem (pg. 365)

A DIFFERENT HOLY SPIRIT (pg. 365)

Mormon View:

The Holy Spirit is a Fluid (pg. 365)
The Holy Spirit Can Only Be In One Place at a Time (pg. 366)

Christian View:

The Holy Spirit is a Person (pg. 366)
The Holy Spirit can be in more than one place at a time (pg. 366)

Related to this topic in this website you may also want to read.

The Trinity (pg. 28)

No Other Gods- rebuttal against Mormon misquotes (pg. 39)

A DIFFERENT GOD

Deuteronomy 13:1-3:

> **"If a prophet** or a dreamer of dreams arises among you and **gives you a sign or a wonder, and the sign or the wonder comes true**, concerning which he spoke to you, saying, **'Let us go after other gods** (whom you have not known) and let us serve them,' **you shall not listen to the words of that prophet** or that dreamer of dreams; for the LORD your God is testing you to find out if you love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul."

False prophecies are not the only reason why we should reject a prophet. If the prophet tells us to follow after other gods, then we are not to listen to that prophet. Have the prophets of the Mormon Church taught us of the God of the Bible? Or have these prophets instead encouraged us to follow after another god?

Topic Index

Mormon View

The God of Mormonism is not the God of the Bible. In the following quotes from L.D.S. authorities we learn:

There are three separate Gods in the Godhead.
God himself was once a man as we are.
God the Father has a body of flesh and bones.

Topic Index

Encyclopedia of Mormonism, Vol.2, GODHEAD

> "On June 16, 1844, in his last Sunday sermon before his martyrdom, Joseph Smith declared that 'in all congregations' he had taught 'the plurality of Gods' for fifteen years: 'I have always declared God to be a distinct personage, Jesus Christ a separate and distinct personage from God the Father, and that the Holy Ghost was a distinct personage and a Spirit: and these three constitute three distinct personages and **three Gods**'." **E10**

The Teachings of Spencer W. Kimball, pg.4

> "**There are three Gods**: the Eternal Father, Elohim, to whom we pray; Christ or Jehovah; and the Holy Ghost who testifies of the others and witnesses to us the truth of all things." **E21**

Journal of Discourses, Vol.6, pgs.3-4 **(PDF pg. 11)**

"Joseph Smith, April 6, 1844

"In order to understand the subject of the dead, for the consolation of those who mourn for the loss of their friends, it is necessary that we should understand the character and being of God, and how he came to be so; for I am going to tell you how God came to be God. We have imagined and supposed that God was God from all eternity; I will refute that idea, and will take away and do away the veil, so that you may see.

"These are incomprehensible ideas to some; but they are simple. It is the first principle of the Gospel to know for a certainty the character of God and to know that we may converse with him as one man converses with another, and that **he was once a man like us; yea, that God himself the Father of us all, dwelt on an earth the same as Jesus Christ himself did**; and I will show
it from the Bible." **E9**

Topic Index

D&C 130:22 **(PDF LDS Scripture pg. 831)**

"The Father has a body of flesh and bones as tangible as man's; the Son also; but the Holy Ghost has not a body of flesh and bones, but is a personage of Spirit. Were it not so, the Holy Ghost could not dwell in us."**E**

Topic Index

Christian View

THE BIBLE DOES NOT AGREE WITH THESE MORMON CONCEPTS.

The Godhead of Mormonism contains three Gods; the Godhead in Christianity contains only one God.

God the Father of Mormonism has not always been God; God the Father in the Bible has always been God.

The Mormon God has body of flesh and bones; the God presented in the Bible does not have a body of flesh and bones.

Psalm 90:1-2:

"Lord, Thou hast been our dwelling place in all generations. Before the mountains were born, or
Thou didst give birth to the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting, Thou art
God."

Isaiah 43:13: "Even from eternity I am He; and there is none who can deliver out of My hand; I act and who can reverse it?"

Topic Index

Isaiah 44:6: "Thus says the LORD, the King of Israel and his Redeemer, the LORD of hosts: 'I am the first and I am the last, and there is no God besides me.'"

In these three verses we have just seen that God has been God from everlasting to everlasting, even from eternity. He is the first and the last and there is no God besides Him. If that does not mean He has always been God, what does it mean?

Topic Index

If God was once human, like us, and through eternal progression became God, then He certainly changed a lot. You would have to change a lot to be like God, wouldn't you? The Bible says that God has not changed.

Malachi 3:6: "For I, the LORD, do not change; therefore you, O sons of Jacob, are not consumed."

Topic Index

So far we have seen that God has always been God, and He does not change. Now we see that He does not have a body of flesh and bones.

John 4:23-24:
"But an hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers shall worship the Father in spirit and truth; for such people the Father seeks to be His worshipers. **God is spirit** and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth.'"

Luke 24:39: "See My hands and My feet, that it is I Myself; touch Me and see, for **a spirit does not have flesh and bones as you see that I have**."

Jesus made both of the above statements. Speaking of the Father He said, "God is spirit". Jesus also said, "a spirit does not have flesh and bones as you see that I have." From Jesus we learn that the Father is spirit and that a spirit does not have a body of flesh and bones.

CONFLICTING MORMON VIEWS

The Book of Mormon also states that God is Spirit.

Alma 18:26-27: **(PDF LDS Scripture pg. 273)**

> "And then Ammon said: 'Believest thou that there is a Great Spirit?'And he said, 'Yea.' And Ammon said: 'This is God.'"[E]

Alma 22:8-11: **(PDF LDS Scripture pg. 282)**

> "And now when Aaron heard this, his heart began to rejoice, and he said: 'Behold, assuredly as thou livest, O king, there is a God.' And the king said: 'Is God that Great Spirit that brought our fathers out of the land of Jerusalem?' And Aaron said unto him: 'Yea**, he is that Great Spirit**, and he created all things both in heaven and in earth. Believest thou this?' And he said: 'Yea, I believe that the **Great Spirit created all things**, and I desire that ye should tell me concerning all these things, and I will believe thy words.'" [E]

Topic Index

The Book of Mormon tells us there are no other Gods.

Alma 11:21-22: **(PDF LDS Scripture pg. 253)**

> "And this Zeezrom began to question Amulek, saying: 'Will ye answer me a few questions which I shall ask you?' Now Zeezrom was a man who was expert in the devices of the devil, that he might destroy that which was good; therefore, he said unto Amulek: 'Will ye answer the questions which I shall put to you?' And Amulek said unto him: 'Yea, if it be according to the Spirit of the Lord, which is in me, for I shall say nothing which is contrary to the Spirit of the Lord.'" [E]

Alma 11:28-29: **(PDF LDS Scripture pg. 253-254)**

> "Now Zeezrom said: 'Is there more than one God?' And he (Amulek) answered 'No.'" [E]

Topic Index

Brigham Young taught that Adam was God.

The Mormon Church no longer believes that Adam was God. In fact, they try to deny that this was ever taught. However, this doctrine is still in their own records, spoken by their former prophet.

Journal of Discourses, Vol.1, pgs.50-51 **(PDF pg. 58)**
Brigham Young, April 9, 1852

> "Now hear it, O inhabitants of the earth, Jew and Gentile, Saint and sinner! When our father Adam came into the garden of Eden, he came into it with a celestial body, and brought Eve, one of his wives, with him. He helped to make and organize this world. He is MICHAEL, the Archangel, the ANCIENT OF DAYS! about whom holy men have written and spoken--HE is our FATHER and our GOD, and the only God with whom WE have to do. Every man upon the earth, professing Christians or non-professing, must hear it, and will know it sooner or later."**E9**

Adam-God references can also be found in

Journal of Discourses, Vol.5, PDF pg. 339-340
Mellineal Star, Vol.15, PDF pg. 807, 831; ***Vol.16***, PDF pg 490, 538. ;
Vol.17, PDF pg. 203,328

Topic Index

Brigham Young's words are as good as Scripture:

Journal of Discourses, Vol.13, pg.95 **(PDF pg. 103)**
Brigham Young, January 2, 1870

> "The Lord is in our midst. He teaches the people continually. I have never yet preached a sermon and sent it out to the children of men, that they may not call Scripture. Let me have the privilege of correcting a sermon, and it is as good Scripture as they deserve." **E9**

Topic Index

A DIFFERENT JESUS

The Jesus of Mormonism is the literal spirit brother of Lucifer and our elder brother.

The Jesus of the Bible is our Creator, and He created angels, including Lucifer.

The Jesus of Mormonism has not always been a God.

The Jesus of the Bible has always been God.

The Jesus of Mormonism was born through sexual relation between God the Father and Mary.

The Jesus of the Bible was born by miraculous conception through the Holy Spirit to the virgin Mary.

Remember that we are warned about false Christs and wrong beliefs about who He is (Mark 13:6-23, Matthew 24:5-24, 2 Peter 2:1-3, 2 Corinthians 11:3-4, John 8:24).

The following L.D.S. quotations are numbered #1-#8 for point of reference to the commentary following.

Topic Index

Mormon View

#1, James R. Clark,
Messages of the First Presidency, Vol.4, pg.266

> "He said, **'Jesus, our elder brother**, was begotten in the flesh by the same character that was in the garden of Eden and who is our Father in Heaven. Who is our 'Father in Heaven'? Here is what President Young said about him; 'Our Father in heaven begat all the spirits that ever were or ever will be upon this earth and they were born spirits in the eternal world.'" **E23**

Topic Index

#2, ***Journal of Discourses, Vol.6***, pgs.207-208 **(PDF pg. 215)**
Joseph Young, October 11, 1857

> "Who is it that is at the head of this? It is the Devil, the mighty **Lucifer**, the great prince of the angels, **and the brother of Jesus**. He left the province of his Father, and took with him a third part of his Father's kingdom, and there was no other alternative but to banish him." **E9**

#3, ***Discourses of Brigham Young***, pgs.53-54 **(PDF pg. 100)**
(Compare to Isaiah 44:24, which states that God created all alone.)

> "The Council in heaven said, 'Let there be an earth, and let there be a firmament above and beneath it,' and it was so. They said, 'Let there be heat and cold,' and it was so. They said, 'Let there be spring and summer, autumn and winter,' and it was so. 'Who will redeem the earth, who will go forth and make the sacrifice for the earth and all things it contains?'**The Eldest Son** said: 'Here am I'; and then he added, 'Send me.' But the **second one, which was 'Lucifer**, Son of the Morning,' said, 'Lord, here am I, send me, I will redeem every son and daughter of Adam and Eve that lives on the earth. '"**E5**

#4, ***Times and Seasons, Vol.5***, pg.758 **(PDF pg. 378)**
(Mormon publication)

> "And again, we exclaim, O Mormonism! No wonder that **Lucifer,** son of the morning, **the next heir to Jesus Christ, our eldest brother**, should fight so hard against his brethren; he lost the glory, the honor, power, and dominion of a God: and the knowledge, spirit, authority and keys of the priesthood of the son of God!"**E24**

#5, Bruce R. McConkie, (L.D.S. Apostle)
A New Witness for the Articles of Faith, pg.66

"Our Blessed Lord is the firstborn spirit child of the Father of Spirits; all others are junior to him.

His is the eternal birthright and the everlasting right of presidency. 'I was in the beginning with the Father,' he says, 'and am the Firstborn' (D&C 93:21).Paul says he is 'the image of the invisible God the firstborn of every creature' (Colossians 1:15). The body he then possessed was a spirit body, a body made of spirit element, a body like those of all the spirit hosts of heaven.

Appearing to the brother of Jared, he said: 'This body, which ye now behold, is the body of my spirit' (Ether 3:16).**In that spirit state he advanced and progressed until, in power, dominion, and intelligence, he became 'like unto God**' (Abraham 3:24). It was then that he created all things and was foreordained to be the Savior **E16**

Topic Index

#6, Bruce R. McConkie,
A New Witness for the Articles of Faith, pg.382

"This recitation of how **Christ worshipped the Father, thus gaining exaltation for himself,** has been revealed to us in this day for a specific reason. 'I give unto you these sayings,' he says — those sayings that set forth how he was saved by worshipping the Father — that you may understand and know how to worship, and know what you worship, that you may come unto the Father in my name, and in due time receive of his fullness. For if you keep my commandments you shall receive of his fullness, and be
glorified in me as I am in the Father; therefore, I say unto you, you shall receive grace for grace" (D&C 93:12-20). **E16**

Under EXALTATION in ***Mormon Doctrine*** on pg.257 They inherit in due course the fullness of the glory of the Father, meaning that they have all power in heaven and on earth. (D. & C. 76:50-60; 93:1-40.) **"Then shall they be gods, because they have no end;** therefore shall they be from everlasting to everlasting, because they continue; then shall they be above all, because all things are subject unto them. **Then shall**
they be gods, because they have all power and the angels are subject unto them" **E6 (PDF pg.95)**

Topic Index

#7, Bruce R. McConkie,
New Witness for the Articles of Faith, pgs.67-68

"**All men (Christ included) were born as the sons of God in the spirit**; one man (Christ only) was born as the Son of God in this mortal world. He is the Only Begotten in the flesh. God was his Father; Mary was his mother. His Father was an immortal man; his mother was a mortal woman. He is the Son of God in the same literal, full, and complete sense in which he is the son of Mary. There is nothing symbolic or figurative about it. He is God's Almighty Son and as such is distinguished from the Father in the same way any son is a separate person from his father." **E16**

#8, Bruce R. McConkie
Mormon Doctrine, pg.546 **(PDF pg. 196)**
ONLY BEGOTTEN SON

> "See BELOVED SON, CHRIST, SON, SON OF GOD. Christ is the Only Begotten (Moses 1:6, 17, 21,
> 33; 2:1, 26-27; 3:18; 4:1), the Only Begotten Son (Jac. 4:5, 11; Alma 12:33-34; 13:5; D. & C. 20:21; 29:42; 49:5; 76:13, 25; John 1:18; 3:16), the Only Begotten of the Father (Moses 5:9). These name-titles all signify that our Lord is the only Son of the Father in the flesh. Each of the words is to be understood literally. Only means only; Begotten means begotten; and Son means son. **Christ was begotten by an Immortal Father in the same way that mortal men are begotten by mortal fathers."** **E6**

Topic Index

Christian view
Commentary on the Previous Quotations

In #1, #2, #3, and #4, we learned that the Jesus of Mormonism is our elder brother, and the literal brother of Lucifer. *The Jesus of the Bible is our Creator; yes, even the creator of angels.*

Colossians 1:13-17

> "For He delivered us from the domain of darkness, and transferred us to the kingdom of His beloved Son, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins. And He is the image of the invisible God, the first-born of all creation. For by Him all things were created, both in the heavens and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities-- all things have been created by Him and for Him. And He is before all things, and in Him all things hold together."

"All things": whether visible or invisible, whether thrones or dominions, or rulers or authorities. "All things" is a concrete statement; included as part of "all things" are mankind, and angels (see also John1:3 and Hebrews 1:2).

Satan was created.

Ezekiel 28:13-15

> "You were in Eden, the garden of God; every precious stone was your covering: the ruby, the topaz, and the diamond; the beryl, the onyx, and the jasper; the lapis lazuli, the turquoise, and the emerald; and the gold, the workmanship of your settings and sockets, was in you. On the day that you were created they were prepared. You were the anointed cherub who covers, and I placed you there. You were on the holy mountain of God; you walked in the midst of the stones of fire. You were blameless in your ways from the day **you were created**, until unrighteousness was found in you."

If Jesus created angels, including Lucifer, how can Jesus be the literal spirit brother of His own creation? He cannot; therefore this Mormon concept of Jesus is also false. Likewise, Jesus is also the creator of mankind; he cannot be our literal elder brother. Furthermore, Scripture never implies that angels become people or that people become angels.

Topic Index

In #5 and #6, we see that the Jesus of Mormonism is not eternal; He was born just as we were. The Jesus of Mormonism has not always been a God; He achieved this state through exaltation. *The Jesus of the Bible is eternal and He has always been God*.

Micah 5:2

> "But as for you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, too little to be among the clans of Judah, from you One will go forth for me to be ruler in Israel. His goings forth are from long ago, from the days of eternity."

John 1:1 and 14

> "1) **In the beginning was the Word**, and the Word was with God, and the **Word was God**….14)
> And the **Word became flesh, and dwelt among us**, and we beheld His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth."

Revelation 1:7-8

> "Behold, He is coming with the clouds, and every eye will see Him, even those who pierced Him; and all the tribes of the earth will mourn over Him. Even so. Amen. 'I am the Alpha and the Omega,' says the Lord God, 'who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty.'"

Revelation 22:13-16

> "I am the Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end. Blessed are those who wash their robes, that they may have the right to the tree of life, and may enter by the gates into the city. Outside are the dogs and the sorcerers and the immoral persons and the murderers and the idolaters, and everyone who loves and practices lying. I, Jesus, have sent My angel to testify to you these things for the churches. I am the root and the offspring of David, the bright morning star."

In the previous quotation under #5, the word "firstborn" is misused from Colossians 1:15. The correct "firstborn" is word #4416 in ***Vine's Expository Dictionary of Biblical Words***:

> "FIRST-BEGOTTEN, FIRSTBORN
>
> "prototokos ^4416^, 'firstborn' (from protos, 'first', and tikto, 'to beget') is used of Christ as born of the Virgin Mary, <Luke 2:7>; further, in His relationship to the Father, expressing His priority to, and preeminence over, creation, not in the sense of being the 'first' to be born. It is used occasionally as superiority of position in the OT, se <Exod. 4:22; Deut. 21:16, 17>, the prohibition being against the evil of assigning the privileged position of the 'firstborn' to one born subsequently to the 'first' child."

This use of this word, as described in ***Vine's*** dictionary, is also shown in the context of the passage.

Colossians 1:18

> "And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things he might have the preeminence." (KJV)

Jesus is said to have preeminence, and is called "firstborn from the dead", showing that the L.D.S. use of the word "firstborn" in this passage is in error.

Topic Index

In #7 and #8, we see that the Jesus of Mormonism was begotten through a sexual relation between Mary and God the Father. *The Jesus of the Bible was a miraculous conception where a virgin gave birth by the power of the Holy Spirit***.**

Luke 1:34-35

> "And Mary said to the angel, 'How can this be, since I am a virgin?' And the angel answered and said to her, 'The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; and for that reason the holy offspring shall be called the Son of God.'"
> (See also Matthew 1:18-20)

Topic Index

The Jesus of Mormonism was born at Jerusalem.
Book of Mormon, Alma 7:10 **(PDF LDS Scripture pg. 242)**

> "And behold, he shall be born of Mary, at Jerusalem which is the land of our forefathers, she being a virgin, a precious and chosen vessel, who shall be overshadowed and conceive by the power of the Holy Ghost, and bring forth a son, yea, even the Son of God."[E]

The Jesus of the Bible was born in Bethlehem.
Micah 5:2

"But as for you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, too little to be among the clans of Judah, from you One will go forth for me to be ruler in Israel. His goings forth are from long ago, from the days of eternity."

Matthew 2:1

"Now after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king, behold, magi from the east arrived in Jerusalem…"

Topic Index

A DIFFERENT HOLY SPIRIT

Whether or not the Holy Spirit of Mormonism is a person or a fluid depends upon which Mormon source you choose to quote. The Holy Spirit of Mormonism is only able to be in one place at a time. *God the Holy Spirit of the Bible is a person and He can be in more than one place at a time.*

Mormon View:

Messages of the First Presidency, Vol.2, pg.237

"Man has been accustomed to associate wisdom, knowledge, love, joy, and all the other faculties and passions, with an organized being or personality. Therefore, when he is informed that the Holy Spirit possesses all these attributes, he, from habit, supposes it to be a person; but there is no necessary connection between these attributes and a personality. Indeed, there is no reason why these attributes may not also belong to a fluid substance."[E23]

Reynolds and Sjodahl,
Commentary on the Book of Mormon, Vol. 4, pg.360

"The Holy Spirit. But, according to the Book of Mormon, as well as other scripture, there is also a Holy Spirit, sometimes called the Holy Ghost, which is not a person, but rather a divine essence, a force, or fluid—for want of a better term—which permeates all that exists."[E25]

Mormon View:
Bruce R. McConkie,
Mormon Doctrine, pg.358-359 **(PDF pg. 130)**

"HOLY GHOST

"The Holy Ghost is the third member of the Godhead. He is a Personage of Spirit, a Spirit Person, a Spirit Man, and a Spirit Entity. He can be in only one place at one time and he does not and cannot transform himself into any other form or image than that of the Man whom he is, though his power and influence can be manifest at one and the same time through all immensity." **E6**

Topic Index

Christian view

The Holy Spirit is a person. There is not a verse that directly states that the Holy Spirit is a person; however, there are passages that attribute characteristics that are applied only to a person, and not to a force or power.

The Holy Spirit is referred to as "He" and He teaches (John 14:26, 1 John 2:27).
The Holy Spirit is referred to as "He" and convicts the world of sin (John 16:7-8).
The Holy Spirit speaks (Acts 4:8, 8:29, 10:19, 13:2; Hebrews 3:7).
The Holy Spirit intercedes (Romans 8:26).
The Holy Spirit leads and directs (Galatians 5:18, Acts 16:6).
The Holy Spirit appoints men to service (Acts 13:2, 20:28).
The Holy Spirit bears witness of Jesus (John 15:26).
The Holy Spirit can be grieved (Ephesians 4:30).
The Holy Spirit is called God and can be lied to (Acts 5:3-4).
The Holy Spirit can be insulted and blasphemed (Hebrews 10:29, Matthew 12:31).

These types of references are only applied to a person with a personality. These are not references that one would use for a force or power.

Topic Index

*The Holy Spirit can be in more than one place at a time***.** Again, there is not a verse that states this directly, but it is implied.

John 14:16

"And I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may be with you forever…"

John 14:26

> "But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all that I said to you.

Jesus told His disciples that the Holy Spirit would be with them forever. Certainly Jesus knew that all of the disciples would not stay grouped together forever. The only way that the Holy Spirit could do this is to be in more than one place at once. “Omnipresence” is an attribute of God that the Father, Jesus, and the Holy Spirit all possess, as the three constitute only one God.

As far as the Holy Spirit being referred to as a "fluid" there is no passage in the Bible that gives a hint of any such thing. This comes only from the minds and imagination of the L.D.S. authorities.

Topic Index

The L.D.S 3rd article of faith is not biblical. The Bible warns us about false gospels so this is a serious matter. In this study we will look at the Mormon idea of salvation and discuss the topic of grace Verses Works.

You can click on A Different Gospel To start reading at the beginning of this topic or use the Topic Index to jump to the part that interest you most.

To see index for all topics on Mormonism click on "**Mormonism Index**" above

Overview of content in this section is as follows:

A DIFFERENT GOSPEL (pg. 369)

- L.D.S. Third Article of Faith (pg. 369)
- What does it mean to be saved? (pg. 369)
- Definitions of "Saved" and "Salvation" (pg. 369)
- Saved from Wrath (pg. 369)
- We are not Saved By "Obedience to the Laws and Ordinances of the Gospel" (pg. 370)
- We are Saved by Grace (a Gift from God), and Not by Works (pg. 371)
- Salvation is to be Resurrected, in Mormon Doctrine (pg. 371)
- The Bible does not Teach Universal Salvation (pg. 372)
- Not Everyone will be Saved, but Everyone will be Resurrected (pg. 372)

"GRACE VS WORKS" "WORKS"
This is actually a different section of this book, but it applies to all cults as well (pg. 52)

- "Grace" and "Works" Defined
- Gift of God and Our Unworthiness
- Defining Faith and the Book of James
- James and Paul
- Paul Rebukes Theory of "Saved by Grace First, then Works"
- Early Church Taught Salvation by Grace

A DIFFERENT GOSPEL

THE WARNING
Galatians 1:8-9

> "But even though we, or an angel from heaven, should preach to you a gospel contrary to that which we have preached to you, let him be accursed. As we have said before, so I say again now, if any man is preaching to you a gospel contrary to that which you received, let him be accursed."

Topic Index

The L.D.S Third Article of Faith states, "We believe that through the Atonement of Christ, all mankind may be saved, by obedience to the laws and ordinances of the Gospel." Even if we interpreted the true meaning of the word "saved" it would be an untrue statement. We are not saved by obedience to the laws and ordinances of the Gospel. If we take this statement at face value, then the issues between Christianity and Mormonism would be," **What does it mean to be saved?"**and "**Grace Versus Works"**.

Topic Index

WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE SAVED?

A good place to start this discussion is to see what the words "saved" and "salvation" actually mean.

Webster's Collegiate Dictionary Tenth Edition

> "**SAVED1. a:** ~~to deliver from s~~in **b:** to rescue or deliver from danger or harm **c:** to preserve or guard from injury, destruction or loss."
> "**SALVATION 1. a:** deliverance from the power and effects of sin."[A13]

Nelson's Illustrated Bible Dictionary

> **SALVATION:** Deliverance from the power of sin; redemption. In the Old Testament, the word salvation sometimes refers to deliverance from danger <Jer. 15:20>, deliverance of the weak from an oppressor <Ps. 35:9-10>, the healing of sickness <Is. 38:20>, and deliverance from blood guilt and its consequences <Ps. 51:14>. It may also refer to national deliverance from military threat <Ex. 14:13> or release from captivity <Ps. 14:7>. But salvation finds its deepest meaning in the spiritual realm of life. Man's universal need for salvation is one of the clearest teachings of the Bible. [C1]

The words "saved" and "salvation" mean that we are rescued and delivered. A logical question would be, "Rescued and delivered from what?" When we turn to Christ, we are saved from receiving God's wrath.

Romans 5:8-9

"God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from the wrath of God through Him."

John 3:36

"He who believes in the Son has eternal life; but he who does not obey the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him."

1Thessalonians 1:9-10

"For they themselves report about us what kind of a reception we had with you, and how you turned to God from idols to serve a living and true God, and to wait for His Son from heaven, whom He raised from the dead, that is Jesus, who delivers us from the wrath to come."

Topic Index

Scripture is clear that to be saved means that we will escape the wrath of God. According to the L.D.S Third Article of Faith "all mankind may be saved, by obedience to the laws and ordinances of the Gospel." The Bible states that salvation comes apart from works; we are not saved because of "obedience to the laws and ordinances of the Gospel".

Galatians 3:2-3

"This is the only thing I want to find out from you: did you receive the Spirit by the works of the Law, or by hearing with faith? Are you so foolish? Having begun by the Spirit, are you now being perfected by the flesh?"

Romans 4:1-5

"What then shall we say that Abraham, our forefather according to the flesh, has found? For if Abraham was justified by works, he has something to boast about; but not before God. For what does the Scripture say? 'And Abraham believed God, and it was reckoned to him as righteousness.' Now to the one who works, his wage is not reckoned as a favor, but as what is due. But to the one who does not work, but believes in Him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is reckoned as righteousness…"

Titus 3:5

"He saved us, not on the basis of deeds which we have done in righteousness, but according to His mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewing by the Holy Spirit…"

John 6:28-29

> "They said therefore to Him, 'What shall we do, that we may work the works of God?' Jesus answered and said to them, 'This is the work of God, that you believe in Him whom He has sent.'"

Topic Index

Ephesians 2:8-9

> "For by grace **you have been saved** through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the **gift of God; not as a result of works**, that no one should boast." (See also Romans 6:23.)

Salvation is a gift of God. You do not work for and earn a gift. If you work for something, it is wages due, and no longer qualifies as a gift. Mormons will refer to the book of James to try to show that we are saved by works. In context, James is not contradicting Paul; he simply is showing that genuine faith produces works. We are not saved by our good works, but if we are genuinely saved, we will naturally do good works. One does not say "baa baa" to ***become*** a sheep; one says "baa baa" because one ***is*** a sheep.

Topic Index

The L.D.S Third Article of Faith also redefines the word "saved "as something other than how the Bible defines the word "saved". Remember, "saved" means delivered from the wrath of God (Romans 5:8-9).

Bruce R. McConkie (Mormon(PDF pg. 238) Apostle)
Mormon Doctrine, pgs.670-671

> "Salvation by Grace
>
> "Since all good things come by the grace of God (that is, by his love, mercy, and condescension), it follows that salvation itself -- in all its forms and degrees -- is bestowed because of this infinite goodness. However, one of the untrue doctrines found in modern Christendom is the concept that man can gain salvation (meaning in the kingdom of God) by grace alone and without obedience. This soul-destroying doctrine has the obvious effect of lessening the determination of an individual to conform to all of the laws and ordinances of the gospel; such conformity being essential if the sought for reward is in reality to be gained. "Immortality is a free gift and comes without works or righteousness of any sort; all men will come forth in the resurrection because of the atoning sacrifice of Christ(1 Cor. 15:22).In and of itself the resurrection is a form of salvation meaning that men are thereby saved from death, hell, the devil, and endless torment (2 Ne. 9:17-27).'O the wisdom of God, his mercy and grace! For behold, if the flesh should rise no more our spirits must become subject to that angel who fell from before the presence of the Eternal God, and became the devil, to rise no more'

(2 Ne. 9:8).In this sense, the mere fact of resurrection is called salvation by grace alone. Works are not involved, neither the works of the Mosaic law nor the works of righteousness that go with the fullness of the gospel."[E6] (End Quote)

Topic Index

The trouble with Bruce McConkie's statement is that "saved" does not mean "resurrected", no matter what dictionary you use. The Bible does not teach universal salvation; not everyone will be saved.

John 3:17-18

> "For God did not send the Son into the world to judge the world, but that the world should be saved through Him. He who believes in Him is not judged; he who does not believe has been judged already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God."

Luke 8:11-12 (Jesus speaking)

> "Now the parable is this: the seed is the word of God. And those beside the road are those who have heard; then the devil comes and takes away the word from their heart, so that they may not believe and be saved."

Topic Index

It is obvious in these two passages that not everyone will be saved; "saved" cannot mean "resurrection" in the way Bruce McConkie claims. Everyone will not be saved, but everyone will be resurrected, as you can see in the next two passages.

Daniel 12:2

> "And many of those who sleep in the dust of the ground will awake, these to everlasting life, but the others to disgrace and everlasting contempt."

John 5:28-29

> "Do not marvel at this; for an hour is coming, in which all who are in the tombs shall hear His voice, and shall come forth; those who did the good deeds to a resurrection of life, those who committed the evil deeds to a resurrection of judgment."

In summary, we are not saved by works, but by grace through faith. We do good works ***because*** we are saved, not ***to become*** saved. Not everyone will be saved, but everyone will be resurrected; some to eternal life, others to eternal judgment. The Third Article of Faith, as well as Bruce McConkie's book ***Mormon Doctrine*** are both in disagreement with the Bible.

Baptism for the Dead is mentioned by the Apostle Paul. This is one of those cases where a person would do well to pay attention to the context. It would also be wise to compare it to other scripture to make sure one is interpreting it correctly.

You can click on **Baptism for the Dead** to start reading at the beginning of this topic or use the page index to jump to the part that interest you most.

To see index for all topics on Mormonism click on "**Mormonism Index**" above

Overview of content in this section is as follows:

BAPTISM FOR THE DEAD (pg. 374)
Quotations from L.D.S. Authorities (pg. 374)
One can be "Saved" without being baptized (pg. 376)
Salvation comes through Faith; it is a Matter of the Heart (pg. 379)
No Biblical Reference Regarding Genealogical Work (pg. 380)
Born of water does not mean baptized (pg. 380)
There is no 2nd chance after death (pg. 384)
The context of 1 Corinthians 15 is Resurrection, not Baptism (pg. 385)
The Apostle Paul was sent to preach the gospel not to baptize (pg. 389)

BAPTISM FOR THE DEAD

Baptism for the dead is a very old idea that is still practiced by some groups in the era in which we live today. Mormons usually think that this idea is unique to their religion; however, this is not entirely true, as you can see in the quote from the ***Encyclopaedia Britannica*** below.

"New Apostolic Church: church organized in Germany in 1863 as the Universal Catholic Church, by members of the Catholic Apostolic Church who believed that new apostles must be appointed to replace deceased apostles and rule the church until the Second Coming of Christ. The present name was adopted in 1906. Its doctrines are similar to the parent church, but the new church was influenced by continental Protestantism, and over time its worship services and tendencies became less Catholic and more Protestant.

The church emphasizes the gifts of the Holy Spirit, which include prophecy, speaking in tongues, and miraculous healing. Sacraments are **baptism**, Holy Communion, and holy sealing (the 'dispensing and reception of the Holy Spirit'). Sealing can only be conferred by the laying on of hands on the head of a member by an apostle, and it assures the member of participation in Christ's rule on Earth for 1,000 years after he returns. **Like the Latter-day Saints, the New Apostolic Church teaches that the sacraments can be received by a living member for a dead person.**" [G3] (Copyright 1994-1998 ***Encyclopaedia Britannica***)

Topic Index

Since baptism for the dead is far more associated with Mormonism, the rest of this study will deal with the Mormon view and what the Bible says. So what does baptism for the dead mean to the Mormon? The best way to answer that is to quote from Mormon authorities.

Smith, Joseph Fielding. ***Doctrines of Salvation***. Compiled by Bruce R. McConkie. 3 vols. Salt Lake City, Utah: Bookcraft, 1954-56. Vol.2, Chapter9, pgs.161-162 **(PDF pg. 318-319)**

"BAPTISM FOR DEAD

"**NO SALVATION WITHOUT BAPTISM**. One of the most emphatic and positive statements of our Savior was his saying to Nicodemus: 'Verily, verily, I say unto thee. Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. **'That to be born of water means to be baptized** is so clear it will not admit of successful dispute. To be born of the Spirit is just as positive a statement in relation to the gift of the Holy Ghost, which is received by the laying on of hands. Nor did the Savior limit his remark by any qualifying clause to refer only to men who are living and with the opportunity of hearing the gospel, or to eliminate from his command those who have passed beyond. The statement is dogmatic, positive, and without qualification: 'Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God!' "PERFORMANCE OF VICARIOUS ORDINANCES. Baptism is an ordinance belonging to this life, as also are confirmation and ordination to the priesthood, and the man who does not receive these blessings here cannot receive them in the spirit world.

There he may repent and believe and accept the truth, but he cannot be baptized, confirmed, or ordained, or endowed, for these ordinances belong here. What is to be done in the matter? We are going to take substitutes who will act vicariously, which means one acting for another, and in the temples they will stand for those who are dead and there, in the behalf of the dead, receive all these blessings for them. When they do this, if the dead accept the labor performed, it is accounted unto them the same as if they had acted for themselves. The Lord did a great vicarious work for all men, and he has delegated power to us in a lesser degree to perform a vicarious work for the dead. So we, too, may become saviors to our fellow men in this manner, performing work for them that they cannot perform for themselves." **E2**

McConkie, Bruce R. ***Mormon Doctrine***. 2d ed. Salt Lake City, Utah: Bookcraft, 1966.
pgs. 72-73, "Baptism For the Dead" **(PDF pg. 28-29)**

> "Based on the eternal principle of vicarious service, **the Lord has ordained baptism for the dead as the means whereby all his worthy children of all ages can become heirs of salvation in his kingdom. Baptism is the gate to the celestial kingdom**, and except a man be born again of water and of the Spirit he cannot gain an inheritance in that heavenly world (John 3:3-5). Obviously, during frequent periods of apostate darkness, when the gospel light does not shine, and also in those geographical areas where legal administrators are not found, hosts of people live and die without ever entering in at the gate of baptism, so as to be on the path leading to eternal life. For them a just God has ordained baptism for the dead, a vicarious-proxy labor ."**E6**

Mormon Doctrine, by Bruce McConkie, "Second Chance Theory", pgs. 685-687 **(PDF pg. 243-244)**

> "**There is no such thing as a second chance to gain salvation by accepting the gospel in the spirit world after spurning, declining, or refusing to accept it in this life**. It is true that there may be a second chance to hear and accept the gospel, but those who have thus procrastinated their acceptance of the saving truths will not gain salvation to the celestial kingdom of God.
>
> **Salvation for the dead is the system by means of which those who 'die without a knowledge of the gospel'** (D. & C. 128:5) may gain such knowledge in the spirit world and then, following the vicarious performance of the necessary ordinances, become heirs of salvation on the same basis as though the gospel truths had been obeyed in mortality. **Salvation for the dead is limited expressly to those who do not have opportunity in this life to accept the gospel but who would have taken the opportunity had it come to them** ..... "Thus the false and heretical doctrine that people who fail to live the law in this life (having had an opportunity to do so) will have a further chance of salvation in the life to come is a soul-destroying doctrine, a doctrine that lulls its adherents into carnal security and thereby denies them a hope of eternal salvation (***Doctrines of Salvation***, vol. 2, pp. 181-196)." **E6**

To sum it up, Mormons believe that one cannot be saved (enter into the kingdom of God, or what is known as the "celestial kingdom") unless he or she is baptized. (Note: sometimes L.D.S. also defines "saved" as "being resurrected"; ***Mormon Doctrine***, pg. 671.) People who do not have the opportunity to hear the gospel according to Mormonism can hear and accept it in the life to come. When a person in the L.D.S. church is baptized in someone else's behalf (as long as that person never had the opportunity to accept the gospel in mortal life), the deceased can then accept the Mormon gospel and enter into the celestial kingdom. This is the reason why the Mormon Church is heavily involved in genealogical research. In the quotes from the Mormon authorities, we are given two Bible references, one reference that mentions baptism for the dead and one that does not mention baptism at all(1 Corinthians.15: 29 and John 3:3-5). It is not wise to build a doctrine on one obscure verse in the Bible, especially if it is in conflict with Scripture that is clear and comprehensible. We should use the clear passages to help us understand those passages that are harder to understand.

The following truths are in conflict with this Mormon doctrine:

One can be saved without being baptized.
Salvation comes from grace through faith; it is a matter of the heart.
There is no Biblical reference instructing or suggesting that one do genealogical research (a necessary step preceding baptism for the dead).
"Born of water" does not mean "baptized".
There is no second chance, even for those who have not heard the Gospel.
The context of 1 Corinthians 15 concerns the resurrection, not baptism.

Topic Index

One can be saved apart from being baptized.

If baptism were a requirement for salvation, one would think that we would find people such as Jesus, and the Apostle Paul, baptizing converts on a regular basis. Furthermore, if baptism for the dead were required, surely it would have been an important practice, and we would see Biblical examples of it. Yet, Paul was thankful that he did not baptize many people, and Jesus did not baptize anyone that we know of. This would make no sense, if either of these concepts were true.

Corinthians 1:14-17

"**I thank God that I baptized none of you** except Crispus and Gaius, that no man should say you were baptized in my name. Now I did baptize also the household of Stephanas; beyond that, I do not know whether I baptized any other. **For Christ did not send me to baptize, but to preach the gospel**, not in cleverness of speech, that the cross of Christ should not be made void."

John 4:1-2

> "When therefore the Lord knew that the Pharisees had heard that Jesus was making and baptizing more disciples than John (although **Jesus Himself was not baptizing**, but His disciples were)…"

Take another look at 1 Corinthians 1:17. Paul said, "For Christ did not send me to baptize, but to preach the gospel". Paul separates the act of baptism from the Gospel. Yet the following verse shows that we are saved by the Gospel.

Corinthians 15:1-2

> "Now I make known to you, brethren, the gospel which I preached to you, which also you received, in which also you stand, by which also you are saved, if you hold fast the word which I preached to you, unless you believed in vain."

Following are two examples of someone who was saved apart from baptism.

In Luke 23:39-43 we read of a thief who was crucified with Jesus. This man rebukes the other thief who was also being crucified, for mocking Jesus. The story concludes in Luke 23:42-43 "***And he was saying, 'Jesus, remember me when You come in Your kingdom!' And He said to him, 'Truly I say to you, today you shall be with Me in Paradise.'"*** The thief obviously was not taken down from the cross and baptized — yet Jesus declared the thief saved, in that they would dwell together in Paradise.

I should mention that there is a difference of opinion about where the "Paradise" Jesus was referencing was located. Some argue that Paradise was not heaven, but rather Abraham's bosom. Three days ***after being crucified and buried*** Jesus said Mary, "Stop clinging to Me, for I have not yet ascended to the Father" (John 20:17). But remember that three days before this, Jesus told the thief, ***"today you shall be with Me in Paradise."*** Some believe Abraham's bosom was a holding place for the righteous dead, separate from Hades. This was before Jesus atoned for our sins. According to Luke 16:19-31: some believed that they could not be in the presence of the Father until Jesus paid the price for their sins. In this sense Jesus meant I am telling you this today that you will be with me in Paradise.

Others argue that Jesus did indeed go directly into the presence of the Father. Right after Jesus told the thief he would be with him in Paradise, Jesus said, "Father, into Thy hands I commit My spirit." The spirit of Jesus went directly into the presence of the Father, but his body went to the grave. Three days after the crucifixion, when Jesus said to Mary, "Stop clinging to Me, for I have not yet ascended to the Father" (John 20:17), Jesus was referring to His physical body.

According to 2 Corinthians 12:2-4, Paradise was the "third heaven". The three heavens are

the sky where the eagles fly;
the stars in outer space;
the dwelling place of God.

Old Testament saints also went directly into the presence of the Father. Examples of this include Enoch (Genesis 5:24, Hebrews 11: 5), and Elijah (2 Kings 2:1-11).Paul also indicated in 2 Corinthians 5:8 and Philippians 1:23 that Christians who die will enter directly into the presence of the Lord. Whichever view one takes, the thief is still taken into the presence of the Father without the benefit of baptism.

The second example of salvation without baptism can be found in the text below.

Acts 10:44-47

> "While Peter was still speaking these words, the Holy Spirit fell upon all those who were listening to the message. And all the circumcised believers who had come with Peter were amazed, because the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out upon the Gentiles also. For they were hearing them speaking with tongues and exalting God. Then Peter answered, 'Surely no one can refuse the water for these to be baptized **who have received the Holy Spirit just as we** did, can he?'"

The Gentiles in this text were baptized, but this was after they had received the Holy Spirit. Even those who say you must be baptized to be saved recognize that un-saved people do not have the Holy Spirit. These people were saved first and even speaking in tongues — which is a gift of the Holy Spirit — before they were baptized. If they were saved first, and baptized later, baptism cannot be the act that provided their salvation.

There are a few other texts that some may use to show we are saved by baptism, so we should look at those texts as well.

Mark 16:16

> "He who has believed and has been baptized shall be saved; but he who has disbelieved shall be condemned."

The key in this passage for those who shall be saved is their ***belief***. This verse shows that unbelief is the reason for being condemned — not the lack of baptism.

Pet 3:18-21

> "18) For Christ also died for sins once for all, the just for the unjust, in order that He might bring us to God, having been put to death in the flesh, but made alive in the spirit;19) in which also He went and made proclamation to the spirits now in prison,20) who once were disobedient, when the patience of God kept waiting in the days of Noah, during the construction of the ark, in which a few, that is, eight persons, were brought safely through the water.21) And corresponding to that, baptism now saves you — not the removal of dirt from the flesh, but an appeal to God for a good conscience-- through the resurrection of Jesus Christ…"

Noah and his family were saved "through the water" because Noah was obedient and built the ark like he was told. Noah first believed God, and then followed instructions. Corresponding to that, we first put our trust in God, and then follow His instructions to be baptized. Yet it is not the dunking in the water that saves us; rather, our appeal to God for a good conscience through the resurrection of Jesus provides salvation.

Noah would not have been saved if he did not use the ark. Being dunked in water does not save without the heart first being purified by the Holy Spirit. Baptism alone, with an unregenerate heart, saves no one. Conversely, the thief on the cross shows that one can be saved without baptism, if his heart has been spiritually reborn.

Topic Index

Salvation comes through faith; it is a matter of the heart.

When we read Matthew 19:16, we learn that a rich young man was specifically asked Jesus how to gain eternal life. He was told to sell his possessions and follow Jesus. This is a matter of the heart!

Again in Luke 10:25, a lawyer specifically asks Jesus how to gain eternal life. He was told, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your strength, and with all your mind; and your neighbor as yourself." Love is certainly a matter of the heart.

In Acts 16:30, a jailer asks Paul and Silas what to do in order to gain salvation. The answer, in Acts 16:31: "They replied, 'Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved — you and your household.'"

There is no Biblical reference instructing or suggesting that one does genealogical research (a necessary step preceding baptism for the dead).

If baptism for the dead were a true doctrine, it certainly would be important enough to be clearly taught in the Bible; a reading of the New Testament shows that it is not. And, as genealogy is a necessary step preceding baptism for the dead, we would also expect to find reference to it in the Bible. Aside from the genealogies of Jesus, which are included to show that He is the Messiah referenced in the Old Testament, genealogy is only mentioned twice in the New Testament.

Titus 3:9

> "But **shun** foolish controversies and **genealogies** and strife and disputes about the Law; for they are unprofitable and worthless."

Timothy 1:3-4

> "As I urged you upon my departure for Macedonia, remain on at Ephesus, in order that you may instruct certain men not to teach strange doctrines, nor to pay attention to myths and endless genealogies, which give rise to mere speculation rather than furthering the administration of God which is by faith."

Granted, these texts have nothing to do with baptism for the dead. They are, however, the only references to genealogy in the New Testament, and certainly in no way encourage anybody to do genealogical work.

"Born of water" does not mean "baptized".

In our first quote on this subject from the L.D.S In Doctrines of Salvation we are told that "born of water" means to be baptized.

John 3:3-8

> "Jesus answered and said to him, 'Truly, truly, I say to you, **unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.'** Nicodemus said to Him, 'How can a man be born when he is old? He cannot enter a second time into his mother's womb and be born, can he?' Jesus answered, 'Truly, truly, I say to you, **unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.**That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. Do not marvel that I said to you, "You must be born again."The wind blows where it wishes and you hear the sound of it, but do not know where it comes from and where it is going; so is everyone who is born of the Spirit.'"

The word ***"baptized"*** is not in this passage. Although the Jewish mind may connect baptism with the use of the word "water", I believe the usage of the word is much deeper than that. The passage is referring to someone who is born again. We are first born physically. Before we are born spiritually we are said to be dead in our trespasses and sins (Ephesians 2:1-5, Colossians 2:13). Until you are born again, even though you are physically alive, you are spiritually dead. The second birth is spiritual.When you are "born again" you are both physically and spiritually alive. Mormons focus on the part of the text that reads: **"unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God".**

We will take this in two parts.

1. **"Born"** does not mean "baptized".
2. **"Water"** does not mean "baptized".

"**Born**" does not mean "baptized".

The Greek word translated as "born" in this passage is defined by ***Strong's***in the following manner:

"1080 gennao (ghen-nah'-o); from a variation of 1085; to procreate (properly, of the father, but by extension of the mother); **figuratively, to regenerate**:

KJV— bear, beget, be born, bring forth, conceive, be delivered of, gender, make, spring."

"**Water**" does not mean "baptized".

The Greek word translated as "water" in this passage is defined by ***Thayer's***as:
"5204 hudor-water:

used of water in rivers, in fountains, in pools
used of the water of the deluge
used of water in any of the earth's repositories
used of water as the primary element, out of and through which the world that was before the deluge, arose and was compacted
used of the waves of the sea
figuratively, used of many peoples,"

"Water" is not a reference to baptism. The word "water", in this passage, by definition can mean literal water. The Greek word, however, is not bound only to this literal definition. This same Greek word for "water" is found in John 3:5, and is also used in the following passage in Ephesians.

Ephesians 5:25-27

> "Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself up for her; that He might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of **water** with the word, that He might present to Himself the church in all her glory, having no spot or wrinkle or any such thing; but that she should be holy and blameless."

(The next two verses give us a little more insight.)

1 Pet 1:23 for you have **been born again** not of seed which is perishable but imperishable, that is, **through the living and abiding word of God.**

Titus 3:5 He saved us, not on the basis of deeds which we have done in righteousness, but according to His mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewing by the Holy Spirit,

Notice the proceeding verse declares that we are not saved by deeds done in righteousness. In the following text we will see that Jesus declares his baptism is a deed to fulfill all righteousness.

Matt 3:13-15 Then Jesus arrived from Galilee at the Jordan coming to John, to be baptized by him. But John tried to prevent Him, saying, "I have need to be baptized by You, and do You come to me?" But Jesus answering said to him, "Permit it at this time; for in this way it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness." Then he permitted Him.

Furthermore Jesus when asked about doing the works (or deeds) of God he simply says they must believe in him as you can see in the following text.

John 6:28-29 They said therefore to Him, "What shall we do, that we may work the works of God?" Jesus answered and said to them, "This is the work of God, that you believe in Him whom He has sent."

Let us consider again 1 Pet.1:23 we find that these ones that have been born again have done this through the word of God. How are they born again? They are born again through the word of God. Remember Jesus was talking to Nicodemus about being born again in John CH.3.
Take special notice of how Eph 5:25-27 said that Christ cleansed his church. (Having cleansed her by the washing of **water** with the word) Water in this case is used in reference to the word of God. Christ church is cleansed by the washing of **water** with the word. The Church in Eph. 5:25-27 is made up of "born again believers" Since Jesus said that "unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God" John 3:3 we can conclude that his church is born again. Christ's church is born again through the word of God by the washing of **water** with the word as well as the washing of regeneration and renewing by the Holy Spirit Titus 3:5.

In the very next chapter after the discussion between Jesus and Nicodemus we find Jesus talking to a Samaritan woman. Here again we see Jesus using water as an illustration that does not mean baptism, but rather Jesus is referring to eternal life which is salvation.

John 4:14 but whoever drinks of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall become in him a well of **water** springing up to eternal life."

Isa 12:3 Therefore you will joyously draw **water** from the springs of salvation.

Jesus talked to Nicodemus and the Samaritan woman using "water" as an illustration. In both cases Jesus was talking about eternal life. The word "baptism" is not in either text. Jesus certainly knew that a Jewish mind might connect baptism with the use of the word "water". However, the Bible also shows us that the usage of the word "water" is much more than the act of baptism. The Jewish mind would be very aware of that as well. The Bible shows us that the term "water" has to do with our regeneration by the Holy Spirit through the word of God. Baptism is our act of obedience to God's command and our proclaiming to the world that we have been regenerated through the Holy Spirit and the word of God.

The term "born again" is only found four times in Scripture.

John 3:3

> "Jesus answered and said to him, 'Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.'"

John 3:7

> "Do not marvel that I said to you, `You must be born again.'"

Peter 1:3

> "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His great mercy has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead…"(KJV uses the phrase "begotten us again" in this verse.)

1 Peter 1:23

> "…for you have been born again not of seed which is perishable but imperishable, that is, through the living and abiding word of God."

The term "born of water" is only found once in Scripture.

John 3:5

> "Jesus answered, 'Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.'"

None of these texts clearly connect baptism with being born again. There are writings in which some of the early church fathers did connect the conversation between Jesus and Nicodemus with baptism. In a similar fashion, "works" are tied to "saving faith", as James points out in his letter. Still, we are told that our works do not save us (this was covered under the subject heading **"Grace vs. Works"** Our "works "are the fruit showing that we are saved. Baptism is not a suggestion; it is a command. The true believer who has been regenerated by the Holy Spirit acts in obedience to this and identifies himself with Jesus Christ. The believer is not saved merely because he has been dunked in water. He has been dunked in water as an act of obedience that confesses he has been regenerated and identifies with the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

There are examples in Scripture of people finding salvation before baptism and apart from baptism. There are no examples of anyone being saved without a change in heart. The Bible shows us that genuine faith will produce works, while it clearly states that we are not saved by our works.

Topic Index

There is no second chance, even for those who have not heard the Gospel.

After death comes the judgment. Even those who have not heard the genuine Gospel (or the Mormon version of the Gospel), there will be no second chance. There is no record in the entire Bible of anyone receiving salvation after he or she had already died. Once a person is judged, there is no record of an appeal, such as we have in our earthly courts.

Hebrews 9:27

"And inasmuch as **it is appointed for men to die once and after this comes judgment."**

According to the first chapter of Romans, people are held accountable for knowing there is a God, because of creation. Creation itself tells us that God exists. Therefore, Man is responsible for what he has done with this knowledge of knowing that God existed.

Romans 1:16-23

> "For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek. For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith; as it is written, 'But the righteous man shall live by faith.' For the wrath of
>
> God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who suppress the truth in unrighteousness, because that which is known about God is evident within them; for God made it evident to them. For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes, His eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly seen, being understood through what has been made, so that **they are without excuse**. For even though they knew God, they did not honor Him as God, or give thanks; but they became futile in their speculations, and their foolish heart was darkened. Professing to be wise, they became fools, and exchanged the glory of the incorruptible God for an image in the form of corruptible man and of birds and four-footed animals and crawling creatures."

This accounts for those who have not heard the Gospel. Creation itself testifies of God's existence. These people are held accountable for what is done with that knowledge of God and as the text states, "they are without excuse".

Topic Index

The context of 1 Corinthians 15 concerns the resurrection, not baptism.

Many Mormons have a testimony declaring that deceased people have appeared to them, thanking them for being baptized on their behalf. To this I must state that our experiences should be interpreted through the Bible — the Bible should not be interpreted through our experiences. Baptism for the dead and its implications are in conflict with what the Bible teaches. It is not wise to accept even what a spirit may have said concerning this. Demons have been around for a long time, and can easily deceive people by masquerading as a deceased person, to help promote that which is contrary to the word of God (the Bible). We are, in fact, warned not to believe every spirit (1 John 4:1, Galatians 1:8).

Having said that we will now examine the context of 1 Corinthians Chapter 15.We will see that Paul is aware of some people who practiced baptism for the dead. Paul argued that it was not logical for those people to believe in baptism for the dead and then deny the resurrection. (The following Scripture is from ***The New American Standard*** version of the Bible, and I added my commentary in boxes throughout the text.)

1 Corinthians 15

"1) Now I make known to you, brethren, the gospel which I preached to you, which also you received, in which also you stand,2) by which also you are saved, if you hold fast the word which I preached to you, unless you believed in vain.3) For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received, that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures,4)and that He was buried, and that He was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures

Verses 1-4 Paul tells us the Gospel is that Christ died for our sins, according to the Scriptures, and that He was buried, and that He was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures.

"5) and that He appeared to Cephas, then to the twelve.6) After that He appeared to more than five hundred brethren at one time, most of whom remain until now, but some have fallen asleep;7) then He appeared to James, then to all the apostles;8) and last of all, as it were to one untimely born, He appeared to me also.9) For I am the least of the apostles, who am not fit to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God.10) But by the grace of God I am what I am, and His grace toward me did not prove vain; but I labored even more than all of them, yet not I, but the grace of God with me

Verses 5- 10 Paul gives an account of the appearances of Jesus after He was resurrected.

"11) Whether then it was I or they, so we preach and so you believed.12) Now if Christ is preached, that He has been raised from the dead, how do some among you say that there is no resurrection of the dead?

Verses 11-12 Paul brings up the fact that some among the Corinthians did not believe in the resurrection of the dead.

"13) But if there is no resurrection of the dead, not even Christ has been raised;14)and if Christ has not been raised, then our preaching is vain, your faith also is vain.15) Moreover we are even found to be false witnesses of God, because we witnessed against God that He raised Christ, whom He did not raise, if in fact the dead are not raised.16) For if the dead are not raised, not even Christ has been raised;17) and if Christ has not been raised, your faith is worthless; you are still in your sins.18) Then those also who have fallen asleep in Christ have perished.19) If we have hoped in Christ in this life only, we are of all men most to be pitied

Verses 13-19 Paul declares that if Jesus did not rise from the dead, then they are false witnesses and our faith is worthless because we are still in our sins.

20 But now Christ has been raised from the dead, the first fruits of those who are asleep.

"21) For since by a man came death, by a man also came the resurrection of the dead.22) For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ all shall be made alive.23) But each in his own order: Christ the first fruits, after that those who are Christ's at His coming…

Verses 21-23 We are told Jesus has indeed risen from the dead. Through Adam mankind receives death, but through Jesus we will live. Jesus is the first fruits of the resurrection; those that belong to Jesus will be resurrected at His return.

"24) then come the end, when He delivers up the kingdom to the God and Father, when He has abolished all rule and all authority and power.25) For He must reign until He has put all His enemies under His feet.26) The last enemy that will be abolished is death.27) For He has put all things in subjection under His feet. But when He says, 'All things are put in subjection,' it is evident that He is excepted who put all things in subjection to Him.28) And when all things are subjected to Him, then the Son Himself also will be subjected to the One who subjected all things to Him, that God may be all in all

Verses 24-28 After the return of the resurrected Christ and the resurrection of the saints, the end will come. That is the end of this age then Christ shall abolish all authority and He shall reign until all enemies are subject to Him. Jesus will conquer even death.

"29) Otherwise, what will **those** do who are baptized for the dead? If the dead are not raised at all, why then are **they** baptized for them? 30) Why are **we** also in danger every hour?

Verses 29-30 Paul asks why certain people (who he simply refers to as **"they")** do baptism for the dead if they do not believe in the resurrection. He is pointing out that these two beliefs are inconsistent with each other.

Paul asks also why he and other Christians would stand in jeopardy; since they were persecuted for teaching the resurrection, it would be inconsistent and irrational to also declare there was no resurrection.

Did you notice the contrast between verses 29 and 30? In verse 28 Paul refers to some people that he does not include as being in unity with himself or other Christians. These people practice baptism for the dead and he refers to them as **"they"(**KJV) or **"they and those"** (NAS). Then in the next verse Paul includes himself with other Christians who proclaim the resurrection. In verse 30 Paul uses the word **"we".**The contrast is between "they" and "we". One group includes himself and others who proclaim the resurrection ("we"). The other group of people Paul makes no connection with between himself and other Christians. Paul simply states that "they" practice baptism for the dead.

In Acts 17:23-33 we see that Paul used an idol with the inscription of an unknown god to proclaim the true God. Paul did not believe in the idol anymore than he believed in baptism for the dead in Corinthians. Paul only pointed to the people's own false belief as a reference they could relate to, to teach them about the truth of God and the resurrection.

"31) I affirm, brethren, by the boasting in you which I have in Christ Jesus our Lord, I die daily.32) If from human motives I fought with wild beasts at Ephesus, what does it profit me? If the dead are not raised, let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die.33) Do not be deceived: 'Bad company corrupts good morals.'34) Become sober-minded as you ought, and stop sinning; for some have no knowledge of God. I speak this to your shame

Verses 31-34 Paul declares that unless there is a resurrection there is no reason to undergo persecution for proclaiming the resurrection. Without the resurrection he might as well adopt the heathen philosophy of "let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die." Paul then tells them not to be deceived by this teaching from those who have no knowledge of God, thus denying the resurrection. This corrupt doctrine denying the resurrection promotes sin which they are to abstain from.

"35) But someone will say, 'How are the dead raised? And with what kind of body do they come?'36) You fool! That which you sow does not come to life unless it dies;37) and that which you sow, you do not sow the body which is to be, but a bare grain, perhaps of wheat or of something else.38) But God gives it a body just as He wished, and to each of the seeds a body of its own.39) All flesh is not the same flesh, but there is one flesh of men, and another flesh of beasts, and another flesh of birds, and40) There are also heavenly bodies and earthly bodies, but the glory of the heavenly is one, and the glory of the earthly is another.41) There is one glory of the sun, and another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars; for star differs from star in glory.42) So also is the resurrection of the dead. It is sown a perishable body it is raised an imperishable body43) it is sown in dishonor, it is raised in glory; it is sown in weakness, it is raised in power;44) it is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body. If there is a natural body, there is also a spiritual body.45) So also it is written, 'The first man, Adam, became a living soul.' The last Adam became a life-giving spirit.46) However, the spiritual is not first, but the natural; then the spiritual.47) The first man is from the earth, earthy; the second man is from heaven.48) As is the earthy, so also are those who are earthy; and as is the heavenly, so also are those who are heavenly.49) And just as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly.50) Now I say this, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable

Verses 35-50 Paul explains concerning the bodies of the resurrected dead.

"51) Behold, I tell you a mystery; we shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed,52) in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet; for the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we shall be changed.53) For this perishable must put on the imperishable, and this mortal must put on immortality.54) But when this perishable will have put on the imperishable, and this mortal will have put on immortality, then will come about the saying that is written, 'Death is swallowed up in victory.55) O death, where is your victory? O death, where is your sting?'56) The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law;57) but thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.58) Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your toil is not in vain in the Lord."

END OF CHAPTER

Verses 51-58 Paul explains concerning the bodies of the translated living.

One could certainly expound more on this chapter, but the main point is that from start to finish, 1 Corinthians 15 is about the resurrection. The context of this chapter is not about baptism.

Topic Index

CAREFULLY CONSIDER THE PURPOSE AND DEPTH OF THE APOSTLE PAUL'S MINISTRY.

Romans 1:1

"Paul, a bond-servant of Christ Jesus, called as an apostle, set apart for the gospel of God"

Romans 1:16

"For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek.

Romans 15:15-16

"But I have written very boldly to you on some points, so as to remind you again, because of the grace that was given me from God, to be a minister of Christ Jesus to the Gentiles, ministering as a priest the gospel of God, that my offering of the Gentiles might become acceptable, sanctified by the Holy Spirit."

1Thessalonians 2:2

"…but after we had already suffered and been mistreated in Philippi, as you know, we had the boldness in our God to speak to you the gospel of God amid much opposition."

1 Timothy 1:11

> "…according to the glorious gospel of the blessed God, with which I have been entrusted."

Acts 20:20

> "…how I did not shrink from declaring to you anything that was profitable, and teaching you publicly and from house to house…."

Acts 20:27

> "For I did not shrink from declaring to you the whole purpose of God."

1Thessalonians 2:9

> "For you recall, brethren, our labor and hardship, how working night and day so as not to be a burden to any of you, we proclaimed to you the gospel of God."

Corinthians 1:17

> "For Christ did not send me to baptize, but to preach the gospel, not in cleverness of speech, that the cross of Christ should not be made void."

All scripture is indeed inspired by God (2 Timothy 3:16). Dealing with the subject of salvation, some people seem to look at only a few obscure and hard to understand passages, ignoring the rest of the teachings on the subject. We need to remember that when Scripture appears to contradict itself, this means that we do not understand something, and need to dig a little deeper for answers. This has always been the case in my own studies.

I certainly do not want to say that we should ignore any Scripture, but I would like you to follow me along a line of logic and reasoning for a moment. Those who believe that baptism or works are conditions of salvation should carefully consider the purpose of the Apostle Paul's ministry. ***Paul was set apart by God to preach the Gospel.*** He declares that the Gospel is the power of God unto salvation. He did not shrink back from declaring the whole purpose of God or anything that was profitable. Paul wrote thirteen of the twenty-seven books in our New Testament. Paul said he did not come to baptize. Paul never connects baptism as a condition of salvation.Paul was very clear that we are saved apart from works (Romans.3:28, Ephesians 2:8-9, 2 Timothy 1:9, Titus 3:5). There are some passages in Scripture that are hard to understand. It is best to let the clear passages shed light on the harder to understand passages. Paul never taught that works or baptism were conditions of our salvation. His whole purpose was to preach the Gospel so that we might be saved.

Topic Index

Here we will look at the Books that Mormons consider scripture. I was in the L.D.C Church myself and I came to the conclusion that three of these books are not the word of God. Here I will show some of the reasons why I came to that conclusion.

You can click on "LDS Standard Works" to start reading at the beginning of this topic or use the Topic Index to jump to the part that interest you most.

To see index for all topics on Mormonism click on "**Mormonism Index**" above

Overview of content in this section is as follows:

L.D.S. STANDARD WORKS (pg. 392)

L.D.S. View of the Bible, and the Eighth Article of Faith (pg. 392)

Testimony of Jesus Concerning Bible, Dead Sea Scrolls (pg. 393)

The Inspired Version of the Bible by Joseph Smith (pg. 394)

The Book of Mormon (pg. 398)
Extensive Population, Civilization on North American Continent before Christ (pg.398)
Smithsonian Institute Letter Concerning Book of Mormon (pg. 398)
No Archaeological Evidence, Things Contrary to Known History (pg. 402)

Doctrine and Covenants and the Pearl of Great Price (pg. 403)

L.D.S. STANDARD WORKS

The standard works of the L.D.S. church are the four books they call scripture: ***The Book of Mormon, The Pearl of Great Price, The Doctrine & Covenants*** and the ***Bible***.

L.D.S. VIEW OF THE BIBLE

The L.D.S. Eighth Article of Faith states, "We believe the ***Bible*** to be the word of God **as far as it is translated correctly**; we also believe the ***Book of Mormon*** to be the word of God."

J. Reuben Clark, Jr., wrote the following on pg. 202 of his book ***On the Way to Immortality and Eternal Life***:

> "As to the Bible, the **Prophet Joseph** on another occasion (October 15, 1843) **said**: 'I believe the Bible as it read when it came from the pen of the original writers. **Ignorant translators, careless transcribers, or designing and corrupt priests have committed many errors**.'" [E26]

Mormon apostle James E. Talmage wrote this in Chapter 13 (pg. 248) of his book, ***Articles of Faith:*** *(PDF pg. 267)*

> "The present is too late a time and the separating distance too vast to encourage the reopening of the question. The New Testament must be accepted for what it claims to be; and though, perhaps, many precious parts have been suppressed or lost, while some corruptions of the texts may have crept in, and errors have been inadvertently introduced through the incapacity of translators, the volume as a whole must be admitted as authentic and credible, and as an essential part of the Holy Scriptures."[E27]

Mormon prophet Joseph Fielding Smith, on pg. 65 of his book,
Answers to Gospel Questions, Vol. 2:

> "There are no original manuscripts. Second, through the years scribes were busy making copies of the scriptures, and they inadvertently, or otherwise, made some changes. There is no original copy of any of the books of the Bible, known to man today; that eliminations could have occurred is very possible. Third, in later translations after the scriptures fell into the hands of Christian scholars who did not accept baptism by immersion, other errors could have occurred. Especially was this the case as it was revealed to Nephi by the angel of the Lord. On this point Nephi wrote: 1 Nephi 13:26 (Book of Mormon): 'And after they go forth by the hand of the twelve apostles of the Lamb, from the Jews unto the Gentiles, thou seest the foundation of a great and abominable church, which is most abominable above all other churches; for behold, **they have taken away from the gospel of the Lamb many parts which are plain and most precious; and also many covenants of the Lord have been taken away**. And all this have they done that they might pervert the right ways of the Lord, that they might blind the eyes and harden the hearts of the children of men.'" [E28]

As you can see, although L.D.S. authorities believe the ***Bible*** to be the word of God, they do not believe that the ***Bible*** is accurate. Their statements show their ignorance of the subject. There are actually thousands of manuscripts validating the accurate transmission of the New Testament. As far as the Old Testament, the Dead Sea Scrolls contain a portion of every book in the Old Testament (with the exception of Esther). The entire book of Isaiah was found in the Dead Sea Scrolls. These manuscripts verify that our Hebrew text today has not changed. Keep in mind that the Dead Sea Scrolls date back to a time before the Lord Jesus Christ was born. If the text was corrupt in Jesus' time period, He certainly would have known about it. Jesus seemed to consider the text reliable.

Matthew 5:18

> "For truly I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, not the smallest letter or stroke shall pass away from the Law, until all is accomplished."

Matthew 24:35

> "Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words shall not pass away."

Luke 24:25-27

> "And He said to them, 'O foolish men and slow of heart to believe in all that the prophets have spoken!Was it not necessary for the Christ to suffer these things and to enter into His glory?' And beginning with Moses and with all the prophets, He explained to them the things concerning Himself in all the Scriptures."

John 5:39

> "You search the Scriptures, because you think that in them you have eternal life; and it is these that bear witness of Me…"

Jesus said "not the smallest letter or stroke shall pass away from the Law, until all is accomplished." (Mt. 5:18)

How could Jesus make such a statement about the scripture if the text was corrupt already?

Jesus said His words would not pass away. Are we now to believe that Jesus was wrong, and His words have passed away?

Jesus told the apostles they were foolish for not believing ALL that the prophets spoke. Then, beginning with Moses and all of the prophets, Jesus explained the Scriptures concerning Himself. Does this sound like He believed they could not trust the Scriptures?

Jesus said the Old Testament testified of Him, and although men might search the Scriptures for eternal life, they were unwilling to come to Him. This would be an unfair statement if the text were really corrupt.

Are we now to believe that even though the Dead Sea Scrolls verify the accuracy of the text in Jesus' day, we cannot trust them now, even though Jesus trusted in them?

Are we now to ignore the thousands of manuscripts giving evidence that shows the accuracy of the New Testament simply on the word of Mormon leaders who have no evidence to back up their statements?

Topic Index

The Inspired Version of the Bible
by Joseph Smith, Jr.

I recognize that the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints does not use this Bible on a regular basis. I have had the experience of Mormons referring to this publication, after I pointed out that the Bible disagrees with L.D.S. doctrine. The fact remains that the prophet and founder of the L.D.S. church produced this "inspired version";

When I first received a copy of the ***Inspired Version***, the first thing I noticed was that the verses do not always line up with verses in the ***Holy Bible.*** That is because Smith added text to the Bible wherever he saw fit. This should present problems to the person who stops to consider it. Bible translators constantly go back to the Greek and Hebrew manuscripts to check the accuracy of the text. There is no manuscript evidence whatsoever to support the additions Joseph Smith made to the Bible. Even if we assumed that God indeed told Smith to revise certain passages, would God have him put words into other people's mouths? Smith's revisions have people saying things that, as far as we know, they never said. He also added a prophecy in the Book of Genesis. Take a look in a regular ***Holy Bible***: the fiftieth chapter of Genesis ends with verse 26.Smith's ***Inspired Version*** continues the chapter on until verse38. That is because Smith added a prophecy. As far as I can tell, he is prophesying himself as coming in the future. I do know that it is not right to add to what God has already established as Scripture:

Proverbs 30:5-6

> "Every word of God is tested; He is a shield to those who take refuge in Him. Do not add to His words lest He reprove you, and you be proved a liar."

Deuteronomy 4:2

> "You shall not add to the word which I am commanding you, nor take away from it, that you may keep the commandments of the LORD your God which I command you."

Following is a comparison of the King James Version of the ***Holy Bible***, and the Joseph Smith ***Inspired Version***. **(PDF pg. 79-80)**

Verse	King James Version (Genesis 50:24-26)	Inspired Version (Genesis 50:24-38)[A33]
24	And Joseph said unto his brethren, I die: and God will surely visit you, and bring you out of this land unto the land which he sware to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob.	And Joseph said unto his brethren, I die, and go unto my fathers; and I go down to my grave with joy. The God of father Jacob be with you, to deliver you out of affliction in the days of your bondage; for the Lord hath visited me, and I have obtained a promise of the Lord, that out of the fruit of my loins, the Lord God will raise up a righteous branch out of my loins; and unto thee, whom my father Jacob hath named Israel, a prophet; (not the Messiah who is called Shilo;) and this prophet shall deliver my people out of Egypt in the days of thy bondage.
25	And Joseph took an oath of the children of Israel, saying, God will surely visit you, and ye shall carry up my bones from hence.	And it shall come to pass that they shall be scattered again; and a branch shall be broken off, and shall be carried into a far country; nevertheless they shall be remembered in the covenants of the Lord, when the Messiah cometh, for he shall be made manifest unto them in the latter days, in the Spirit of power; and shall bring them out of darkness into light; out of hidden darkness, and out of captivity unto freedom.
26	So Joseph died, being an hundred and ten years old: and they embalmed him, and he was put in a coffin in Egypt.	A seer shall the Lord my God raise up, who shall be a choice seer unto the fruit of my loins.
	END OF CHAPTER	**ADDITIONAL TEXT:**
27		Thus saith the Lord God of my fathers unto me, A choice seer will I raise up out of the fruit of thy loins, and he shall be esteemed highly among the fruit of thy loins; and unto him will I give commandment that he shall do a work for the fruit of thy loins, his brethren.
28		And he shall bring them to the knowledge of the covenants which I have made with

		thy fathers; and he shall do whatsoever work I shall command him.
29		And I will make him great in mine eyes, for he shall do my work; and he shall be great like unto him whom I have said I would raise up unto you, to deliver my people, O house of Israel, out of the land of Egypt; for a seer will I raise up to deliver my people out of the land of Egypt; and he shall be called Moses. And by this name he shall know that he is of thy house; for he shall be nursed by the king's daughter, and shall be called her son.
30		And again, a seer will I raise up out of the fruit of thy loins, and unto him will I give power to bring forth my word unto the seed of thy loins; and not to the bringing forth of my word only, saith the Lord, but to the convincing them of my word, which shall have already gone forth among them in the last days;
31		Wherefore the fruit of thy loins shall write, and the fruit of the loins of Judah shall write; and that which shall be written by the fruit of thy loins, and also that which shall be written by the the fruit of the loins of Judah, shall grow together unto the confounding of false doctrines, and laying down of contentions, and establishing peace among the fruit of thy loins, and bringing them to a knowledge of their fathers in the latter days; and also to the knowledge of my covenants, saith the Lord.
32		And out of weakness shall he be made strong, in that day when my work shall go forth among all my people, which shall restore them, who are of the house of Israel, in the last days.
33		And that seer will I bless, and they that seek to destroy him shall be confounded; for this promise I give unto you; for I will remember you from generation to generation; and his name shall be called Joseph, and it shall be after the name of his

		father; and he shall be like unto you; for the thing which the Lord shall bring forthby his hand shall bring my people unto salvation.
34		And the Lord sware unto Joseph that he would preserve his seed for ever, saying, I will raise up Moses, and a rod shall be in his hand, and he shall gather together my people, and he shall lead them as a flock, and he shall smite the waters of the Red Sea with his rod.
35		And he shall have judgment, and shall write the word of the Lord. And he shall not speak many words, for I will write unto him my law by the finger of mine own hand. And I will make a spokesman for him, and his name shall be called Aaron.
36		And it shall be done unto thee in the last days also, even as I sworn. Therefore, Joseph said unto his brethren, God will surely visit you, and bring you out of this land unto the land which he sware to Abraham, and unto Isaac, and to Jacob.
37		And Joseph confirmed many other things unto his brethren, and took an oath of the children of Israel, saying unto them, God will surely visit you, and ye shall carry up my bones from hence.
38		So Joseph died when he was an hundred and ten years old; and they embalmed him, and they put him in a coffin in Egypt; and he was kept from burial by the children of Israel, that he might be carried up and laid in the sepulcher with his father. And thus they remembered the oath which they sware unto him.
		END OF CHAPTER

The Book of Mormon

For some reason some Mormons look to both the North American and South American continents for archaeological evidence that will confirm writings found in the ***Book of Mormon***. Looking for such ***Book of Mormon*** evidence in South America is looking in the wrong place; and, it's important to remember that we are not looking for some obscure village, but rather a great nation. The lack of any evidence for the ***Book of Mormon*** made more of an impact on me when I realized how big the nation was that was supposed to have disappeared without a trace.

First, I would like to show just where we should begin our search for evidence of the people mentioned in the ***Book of Mormon***. Next, I will show just how big the nation was that these people supposedly grew into, and some of the things they had.

In the preface of the ***Book of Mormon*** we are told that Joseph Smith was led to some gold plates by an angel; Smith later translated these plates into the ***Book of Mormon***. The full story is also found in the book ***Pearl of Great Price,*** in the section entitled "Joseph Smith History 1:34"
(also called "Joseph Smith 2,**(PDF LDS Scripture pg. 15)** 1:34").

> "He said there was a book deposited, written upon gold plates, giving an account of the former inhabitants of this continent, and the source from whence they sprang. He also said that the fullness of the everlasting Gospel was contained in it, as delivered by the Savior to the ancient inhabitants…" **E**

Topic Index

At the beginning of this chapter, in verses 3-5, we are told this incident took place in Manchester, New York. The angel told Joseph (while in New York) that these gold plates told "of the former inhabitants of this continent". Therefore, we know to search for evidence of these former inhabitants on the North American Continent. There are some logical questions to ask when searching for this evidence. How big was this nation? What sort of possessions and tools did they have and use, that we should look for? We can look to the ***Book of Mormon*** to supply us with these answers.

Ether 10:25 **(PDF LDS Scripture pg. 524)**

> "And they did make all manner of tools to till the earth, both to plow and to sow, to reap and to hoe, and also to thrash." **E**

Ether 9:16-19 **(PDF LDS Scripture pg. 521)**

> " 16) And the Lord began again to take the curse from off the land ,and the house of Emer did prosper exceedingly under the reign of Emer; and in the space of sixty and two years they had become exceedingly strong, insomuch that they became exceedingly rich— 17)Having all manner of fruit, and of grain, and of silks, and of fine linen, and of gold, and of silver, and of precious things; 18) And also all manner of cattle, of oxen, and cows, and of sheep, and of swine, and of goats, and also many other kinds of animals which were useful for the food of man. 19) And they also had horses, and asses, and there were elephants and cureloms and cumoms; all of which were useful unto man, and more especially the elephants and cureloms and cumoms…" [E]

There were so many people; they spread out upon the face of the land. They had buildings, machinery, and metals, including steel (Jarom 1:89). There were so many people, they could be found from coast to coast (Helaman 3:8).Not only were there people from coast to coast, there was building as well (Mormon 1:7). They built ships, Temples, and synagogues (Helaman 3:14). There were wars in which as many as 10,000 people died in a single battle (Mormon 6:11).There was a money system, which included lots of different types of coins (Alma 11:4-19).

It is hard to imagine that a group of people large enough to be spread from "coast to coast", a people who built ships, buildings, machinery, and more, could disappear and not leave any trace. "We are able to cite archaeological evidence for the things written in ***The Holy Bible***, evidence that dates as far back in time as this time frame in the ***Book of Mormon***."

Topic Index

It stands to reason that if the ***Book of Mormon*** is true or has any historical significance at all that there would be some confirmation of it by archaeology. Out of all of the research and study done on this continent there has not been a single thing found in archaeological diggings that connects to the ***Book of Mormon***. In fact, the geography of the land — its mountains, rivers, and valleys —has never been matched with this or any other continent.

The ***Book of Mormon*** mentions silk, steel, horses and other such things that are known not to have been here during pre-Columbian times (**see "letter from Smithsonian"** next page **)** Inside the ***Book of Mormon*** we are told of several sets of ancient plates that contained the history of the people in America from 600 BC to 421 AD. I find it interesting that no one knows where any of these plates are. None of these plates has ever been found.

Some members of the L.D.S. church claim that archaeology has confirmed the ***Book of Mormon.*** One of the more well-known claims is that the Smithsonian Institution (the world's largest museum and research complex) has found proof and is using the ***Book of Mormon*** as a guide to study America. This claim became so well-known that the Smithsonian was forced to prepare a letter in response to the many inquires received concerning this. I wrote the Smithsonian myself, and have included the letter here.

This is a reprint of a letter I received from the Smithsonian Institution when I wrote them regarding the ***Book of Mormon***.

Information from the National Museum of Natural History

SMITHSONIAN INSTITUTION WASHINGTON, D.C. 20560

"Your recent inquiry concerning the Smithsonian Institution's alleged use of the Book of Mormon as a scientific guide has been received in the Smithsonian's Department of Anthropology.

The Book of Mormon is a religious document and not a scientific guide. The Smithsonian Institution has never used it in archaeological research and any information that you have received to the contrary is incorrect. Accurate information about the Smithsonian's position is contained in the enclosed "Statement Regarding the Book of Mormon," which was prepared to respond to the numerous inquiries that the Smithsonian receives on this topic.

Because the Smithsonian regards the unauthorized use of its name to disseminate inaccurate information as unlawful, we would appreciate your assistance in providing us with the names of any individuals who are misusing the Smithsonian's name. Please address any correspondence to:
Anthropology Outreach Office
Department of Anthropology
National Museum of Natural History MRC 112
Smithsonian Institution
Washington, DC 20560

PREPARED BY
THE DEPARTMENT OF ANTHROPOLOGY
SMITHSONIAN INSTITUTION, 1996"

"STATEMENT REGARDING THE BOOK OF MORMON

The Smithsonian Institution has never used the Book of Mormon in any way as a scientific guide. Smithsonian archaeologists see no direct connection between the archaeology of the New World and the subject matter of the book.

The physical type of the American Indian is basically Mongoloid, being most closely related to that of the peoples of eastern, central, and northeastern Asia. Archaeological evidence indicates that the ancestors of the present Indians cane into the New World - probably over a land bridge known to have existed in the Being Strait region during the last Ice Age - in a continuing series of small migrations beginning from about 25,000 to 30,000 years ago.

Present evidence indicates that the first people to reach this continent from the East were the Norsemen who briefly visited the northeastern part of North America around A.D. 1000 and then settled in Greenland. There is nothing to show that they reached Mexico or Central America.

One of the main lines of evidence supporting the scientific finding that contacts with Old World civilizations if indeed they occurred at all, were of very little significance for the development of American Indian civilizations, is the fact that none of the principal Old World domesticated food, plants, or animals (except the dog) occurred in the New World in pre-Columbian times.

American Indians had no wheat, barley, oats, millet, rice, cattle, pigs, chickens, horses, donkeys, camels before 1492. (Camels and horses were in the Americas, along with the bison, mammoth, and mastodon, but all these animals became extinct around 10,000 B.C. at the time when the early big game hunters spread across the Americas.)

Iron, steel, glass, and silk were not used in the New World before 1492 (except for occasional use of unsmelted meteoric iron). Native copper was worked in various locations in pre-Columbian times, but true metallurgy was limited to southern Mexico and the Andean region, where its occurrence in late prehistoric times involved gold, silver, copper, and their alloys, but not iron.

There is a possibility that the spread of cultural traits across the Pacific to Mesoamerica and the northwestern coast of South America began several hundred years before the Christian era. However, any such inter-hemispheric contacts appear to have been the results of accidental voyages originating in eastern and southern Asia. It is by no means certain that even such contacts occurred; certainly there were no contacts with the ancient Egyptians, Hebrews, or other peoples of Western Asian and the Near East.

No reputable Egyptologist or other specialist on Old World archeology, and no expert on New World prehistory, has discovered or confirmed any relationship between archaeological remains in Mexico and archaeological remains in Egypt.

> Reports of findings of ancient Egyptian Hebrew, and other Old World writings in the New World in pre-Columbian contexts have frequently appeared in newspapers, magazines, and sensational books. None of these claims has stood up to examination by reputable scholars. No inscriptions using Old World forms of writing have been shown to have occurred in any part of the Americas before 1492 except for a few Norse rune stones which have been found in Greenland."

(End of Letter from the Smithsonian Institute)

Topic Index

I would like to conclude the thoughts concerning archaeology and the ***Book of Mormon*** with this quote from the ***Encyclopedia of Mormonism, Volume 1***:

"ARCHAEOLOGY

> "Archaeological data from the ancient Near East and the Americas have been used both to support and to discredit the ***Book of Mormon***. Many scholars see no support for the ***Book of Mormon*** in the archaeological records, since no one has found any inscriptional evidence for, or material remains that can be tied directly to, any of the persons, places, or things mentioned in the book (Smithsonian Institution)." **E10**

Not only do we lack archaeological evidence, but the ***Book of Mormon*** also gives false information about events that took place in other areas, as well. I would like to share two examples of this here. ***The Holy Bible*** and history agree that Jesus was born in Bethlehem. This can be verified in ***Grolier's Multimedia Encyclopedia*** and Matthew 2:1; but the ***Book of Mormon*** claims Jesus was to be born at Jerusalem. Alma 7:10 reads, "And behold, he shall be born of Mary, at Jerusalem which is the land of our forefathers…" **(PDF LDS Scripture pg. 242)**

The second example I will mention is found in the ***Book of Mormon***at 1 Nephi 2:8: "And it came to pass that he called the name of **the river, Laman, and it emptied into the Red Sea;** and the valley was in the borders near the mouth thereof." **E (PDF LDS Scripture pg. 22)**

The problem with this verse is that there is no river "Laman" that empties into the Red Sea. In fact there is no river **at all** that empties into the Red Sea.

Encyclopaedia Britannica**,** Multimedia Disc

> "At the Strait of Mandeb the channel is kept open by blasting and dredging. **No water enters the Red Sea from rivers**, and rainfall in the desert climate is scant; but the evaporation loss, in excess of 80 inches (2,000 mm) per year, is made up by an inflow of water through the eastern channel of the Strait of Mandeb from the Gulf of Aden."**G3**

International Standard Bible Encylopaedia, Electronic Database

> "The **Red Sea** has a length of 1,350 miles and an extreme breadth of 205 miles. It is remarkable that while **it has no rivers flowing into it** and the evaporation from its surface is enormous, it is not much saltier than the ocean, from which it is inferred that there must be a constant influx of water from the Indian Ocean through the Straits of Bab-el-Mandeb, together with an outflow of the more saline water beneath the surface." **C1**

Topic Index

Doctrine & Covenants contains known false prophecies. Examples shown were D&C Section 84 87. This leads to the logical conclusion that ***Doctrine & Covenants*** is not the word of God.

The Pearl of Great Price contains the Book of Abraham, which is a proven fraud. The Book of Abraham was supposedly translated by Joseph Smith, from some papyrus that he had acquired. But the papyrus that Smith used to supposedly translate the Book of Abraham — papyrus which had conveniently disappeared — resurfaced. Although the L.D.S. church hoped this was a very significant find, it turned out that the papyrus substantiated fraud. Rather than the text we see in the ***Pearl of Great Price,*** the papyrus is actually an Egyptian book concerning the dead. For a detailed documented examination I would refer the reader to the book:

Mormonism: Shadow or Reality by Sandra and Jerald Tanner, pages 294-369

I will just include a couple of quotes here.

Michael Dennis Rhodes, BYU Studies, Vol. 17, No. 3, pg.274
(L.D.S Collectors Library 97 by Infobases)

> "Conclusion

"Although we can, with the help of other similar texts, reconstruct the text and figures of the Joseph Smith Hypocephalus with a fair degree of accuracy, we are still far from completely understanding the message which the Egyptians meant to convey by it. The text of the hypocephalus itself seems to be an address to Osiris, the god of the Dead, on behalf of the deceased, Sheshonk. As is the case with most Egyptian text (especially religious text), it is full of references to matters either obscure or unknown to us, although undoubtedly clear to the Egyptians. Needless to say, much work is still to be done before we can fully understand the import of the Joseph Smith Hypocephalus, and hypocephali in general. Unfortunately, there has been little or no work done on them since the end of the last century. I hope, however, that I have been able to contribute to our knowledge of this interesting group of texts." **E17**

Mormonism: Shadow or Reality, by Jerald and Sandra Tanner, pg. 332

"Naomi Woodbury, a Mormon who studied Egyptoloty, had this to say which is found in **'A Journal of Mormon Thought'** Autumn 1968, page 8: 'I myself studied Egyptian hieroglyphics at UCLA several years ago in hope of resolving some of the problems connected with the Book of Abraham in Joseph Smith's favor. Unfortunately, as soon as I learned the language well enough to use a dictionary I was forced to conclude that Joseph Smith's translation was mistaken, however sincere it might have been. Facsimile No. 2 in the **Pearl of Great Price** contained enough readable writing to convince me that it had purely Egyptian significance. This was a disappointment to me, but the discovery has given me more time to restructure my thinking about Joseph Smith and the Book of Abraham than most of your readers will yet have had. My faith in the Church rests on personal feelings, but it has to find a place in historical facts as well.

'After the appearances of the photographs of the papyri…I made some attempts to translate the "Book of Breathing(s)" text, with the help of…a book, which included…a fairly good text of the Book of Breathings….It belongs to a kind of literature, which is alien to Christianity and our Church…

'Let us not lose sight of what I think is the primary importance of this papyri find. It can free us from our dilemma about excluding Negroes from the Priesthood. Perhaps our Father in Heaven intended the papyri to come to light now for just this purpose.'"[A34] (End Quote)

I find it interesting that Naomi justifies the idea that a so-called prophet of God, translating God's written word, under God's authority, entirely mistakes an Egyptian book on the dead to in fact be the Book of Abraham, by suggesting that God only brought this mistake to anyone's attention (a hundred years or so later) to allow the Negro to have the priesthood. That is a pretty major mistake for God and His prophet to make.

Mormonism: Shadow or Reality, by Jerald and Sandra Tanner, pg. 321

"***Improvement Era, Vol. 16***, pg. 615

" 'More than fifty years ago the Egyptologist Samuel A.B. Mercer made this observation concerning Joseph Smith's work in the Egyptian language:
"All scholars came to the same conclusion, viz: That Smith could not at all correctly translate any Egyptian text, as his interpretation of the facsimiles show. Any pupil of mine who would show such an absolute ignorance of Egyptian as Smith does, could not possibly expect to get more than zero in an examination in Egyptology….

"I speak as a linguist when I saw that if Smith knew Egyptian and correctly interpreted the facsimiles which you submitted to me, then I don't know a word of Egyptian, and Erman's Grammar is a fake, and all modern Egyptologists are deceived." ',"[A34]

THE CHURCH DID NOT NEED TO BE RESTORED; IT NEVER LEFT

According to Mormonism Christ's church was non-existent soon after the apostles and was restored upon the earth in the 1800s through Joseph Smith. Following are some quote from L.D.S. sources.

Pearl of Great Price, Joseph Smith, 2:17-19 **(PDF LDS Scripture pg. 919)**

> "17) It no sooner appeared than I found myself delivered from the enemy which held me bound.
>
> When the light rested upon me **I saw two Personages, whose brightness and glory defy all description, standing above me in the air. One of them spake unto me, calling me by name and said, pointing to the other — This is My Beloved Son. Hear Him!** 18) **My object in going to inquire of the Lord was to know which of all the sects was right, that I might know which to join.** No sooner, therefore, did I get possession of myself, so as to be able to speak, than I asked the Personages who stood above me in the light, which of all the sects was right **(for at this time it had never entered into my heart that all were wrong) — and which I should join.** 19) **I was answered that I must join none of them, for they were all wrong;** and the Personage who addressed me said that all their creeds were am abomination in his sight; that those professors were all corrupt; that 'they draw near to me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me, they teach for doctrines the commandments of men, having a form of godliness, but they deny the power thereof."[E]

Here in L.D.S. scripture we find that Joseph Smith declared that he should not join any of the churches in his day because they were all wrong, and their creeds were an abomination to the Lord.

D&C 1:29-30 **(PDF LDS Scripture pg. 569)**

> "29) And after having received the record of the Nephites, yea, even my servant Joseph Smith, Jun., might have power to translate through the mercy of God, by the power of God, the Book of Mormon. 30) And also those to whom these commandments were given, might have power to lay the foundation of this church, and to bring it forth out of obscurity and out of darkness, the only true and living church upon the face of the whole earth, with which I, the Lord, am well pleased, speaking unto the church collectively and not individually…"[E]

This L.D.S. scripture shows that Joseph Smith was to be used to lay the foundation of the Lord's church.

Mormon Doctrine, by Bruce R. McConkie, pg. 43 **(PDF pg. 19)**
APOSTASY
"This universal apostasy began in the days of the ancient apostles themselves." **E6**

According to this Mormon Apostle, apostasy (when the church disappeared from the face of the earth) began in the first century.

Encyclopedia of Mormonism, Vol.4

"TRUE AND LIVING CHURCH

However, as Christ and his apostles had prophesied, the 'true' Church they established was lost from the earth through apostasy (JS—M 1:7-9, 22; 2 Thes. 2:3). Therefore there was a need for a restoration. Guided by angelic messengers and by revelation from God, Joseph Smith and his successors have reestablished Christ's Church in these 'latter days.' Members bear testimony that the Church is true because they believe it is the restored Church of Christ, with the same authority, teachings, organization, and spirit found in the Church that the Savior originally established." **E10**

The Bible does tell us of a falling away in the last days. It does not, however, declare that Christ's church would disappear altogether from the face of the earth.

Isaiah 9:6-7

> "For a child will be born to us, a son will be given to us; and the government will rest on His shoulders; and His name will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Eternal Father, Prince of Peace. There will be no end to the increase of His government or of peace, On the throne of David and over his kingdom, to establish it and to uphold it with justice and righteousness from then on and forevermore. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will accomplish this."

What is His government? It is His rule or dominion that will increase, and there will be no end. God rules over and has dominion over His church. God says there will be no end to this government from the time of Christ is born till forevermore. He does not say, "There will be a break in this government for almost 2,000 years, and then I will restore it through Joseph Smith."

Ephesians 3:21

> "…to Him be the glory in the church and in Christ Jesus to all generations forever and ever. Amen."
>
> (In this verse, Paul declares, to God be the glory in the church and in Jesus forever.)

Luke 1:32-33

> "He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Most High; and the Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David; and He will reign over the house of Jacob forever; and His kingdom will have no end."

Corinthians 4:20

> "For the kingdom of God does not consist in words, but in power."

(In Luke, an angel declares that Jesus will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and His kingdom would have no end. Paul declares in his letter to the Corinthians that the kingdom of God consists of power. Are we to believe that the Lord had no power upon the earth for almost 2,000 years, and that there was a multiple generation gap of Jesus' reign over the house of Jacob?)

Matthew 16:18

> "And I also say to you that you are Peter, and upon this rock I will build My church; and the gates of Hades shall not overpower it."

The Rock is Christ; 1 Corinthians 10:4

> "…and all drank the same spiritual drink, for they were drinking from a spiritual rock which followed them; and the rock was Christ."

Here we see that Christ's church is even stronger than the gates of Hell. Nothing or no one can break Christ's church, not even for a short time. God the Father, Jesus in the flesh, an Angel, and Paul — all indicated there would be no end to Christ's church. There was no indication or implication that there would be a break; why restore something that is not gone? Throughout the judgment in the book of Isaiah, God leaves a remnant, a few people. In Chapters 6-9 of Genesis, which discusses God's flooding of the world, he saved Noah and his family. When God wiped out Sodom and Gomorrah, He spared Lot and his daughters (Genesis 18 and 19). Elijah thought he was the only one left who served God, yet God said he reserved 7,000 others (1 Kings 19:13-18).God has always been capable of keeping His followers from being wiped out, and He promised to do so.

Yet along comes Joseph Smith, who says that the church is gone and insists that God gave him a whole new revelation. Joseph then builds a new church; one that does not believe the doctrines found in the Bible.

GOD'S FOREKNOWLEDGE NOT PRE-EXISTENCE

The Mormon Church teaches that all people were first born in the spirit world through heavenly parents, prior to being born on this earth. Following are a couple of L.D.S. sources that show this belief.

Encyclopedia of Mormonism, Vol.3

> "PRE-EXISTENCE
>
> [The term 'pre-existence,' or more accurately, 'premortal existence,' refers to a period of individual conscious and accountable life before birth into mortality on this earth. It is Latter-day Saint doctrine that living things existed as individual spirit beings and possessed varying degrees of intelligence in an active, conscious spirit state before mortal birth and that the spirit continues to live and function in the mortal body. The revelations teach that premortal spirit bodies have general resemblance to their physical counterparts."[E10]

Joseph Fielding Smith, ***Answers to Gospel Questions, Vol. 1***, pg. 7

> "In an article published in 'The Improvement Era' President Joseph F. Smith and his counselors John B. Winer and Anthon H. Lund said the following in relation to Adam: 'Adam; our progenitor, the first man, was like Christ, a pre-existent spirit, and like Christ he took upon him an appropriate body, the body of a man, a "living soul". The doctrine of the pre-existence — revealed so plainly, particularly in latter days — pours a wonderful flood of light upon the otherwise mysterious problem of man's origin. It shows that a man, as a spirit, was begotten and born of heavenly parents, and reared to maturity in the eternal mansions of the Father, prior to coming upon the earth in a temporal body to undergo experience in mortality. It teaches that all men existed in the spirit before any man existed in the flesh, and that all who have inhabited the earth since Adam have taken bodies and become souls in like manner.'" [E28]

The Bible tells us that God has always existed. In the Bible, we can find that angels are created, yet pre-date mankind. We also find that God has knowledge of events before they take place. Furthermore, God knows details about people before they are even born. We can show from the Bible that God has perfect detailed knowledge of the future. Nowhere does the Bible teach that mortal man has existed in any other state prior to being conceived by our mortal parents here on this earth. In fact, the Bible indicates that our spirits were formed within our bodies while we were in our mother's wombs; before this we did not exist. Consider the following passages from the Bible.

Romans 4:17

> "... (as it is written, 'A father of many nations have I made you') in the sight of Him whom he believed, even God, who gives life to the dead and calls into being that which does not exist."

Psalm 139:16

"Thine eyes have seen my unformed substance; and in Thy book they were all written, the days that were ordained for me when as yet there was not one of them.

Isaiah 44:24

"Thus says the LORD, your Redeemer, and the one who formed you from the womb, 'I, the LORD, am the maker of all things, stretching out the heavens by myself, and spreading out the earth all alone…'"

Zechariah 12:1

"The burden of the word of the LORD concerning Israel. Thus declares the LORD who stretches out the heavens, lays the foundation of the earth, and forms the spirit of man within him…"

We can glean the following from the previously quoted passages in the Bible.

That which does not exist as we see in Romans 4:17 is a pretty strong statement and the context is people. It does not even give room for the belief of existing in some other form.

It seems the spirit is created in the womb (Isaiah 44:24 and Zechariah 12:1). The body of man would have to exist before the spirit, if God "forms the spirit of man within him".

In Psalm 139:16 we see that man did not have a body beforehand. (I say that because a body is not an "unformed substance".) In this same Psalm we see he did not yet have any days.

We are formed in the womb (Isaiah 44:24) and our spirit is formed within the body (Zechariah 12:1). Before that we did not exist (Romans 4:17).

God has always been able to see the past, the present, and the future. We can sometimes see in Scripture that God has knowledge of people's future. For example, we are told in Isaiah 44:28-45:1 about Cyrus. This is a prophecy that came true, although Cyrus was not yet born; the prophecy was fulfilled about 160 years later. Because God knew Cyrus by name does not mean he had a pre-existence. It simply means God knows the future.

Marriage for Eternity & Polygamy

The following is a statement by Brigham Young, from pgs. 268-269 of the August 19, 1866 ***Journal of Discourses, Vol. 11***:"The only men who become Gods, even the Sons of God, are those who enter into polygamy." **E9 (PDF pg. 277)**

Some people in the Old Testament did have more than one wife, but this practice was never ***condoned*** by God, and certainly never ***commanded*** by God. The leaders in the Mormon Church ignored the New Testament on this matter altogether.

1 Timothy 3:2

> "An overseer, then, must be above reproach, the husband of one wife, temperate, prudent, respectable, hospitable, able to teach…"

Timothy 3:12

> "Let deacons be husbands of only one wife, and good managers of their children and their own households."

Titus 1:5-7

> "For this reason I left you in Crete, that you might set in order what remains, and appoint elders in every city as I directed you, namely, if any man be above reproach, the husband of one wife, having children who believe, not accused of dissipation or rebellion. For the overseer must be above reproach as God's steward, not self-willed, not quick-tempered, not addicted to wine, not pugnacious, not fond of sordid gain…"

Joseph Smith used the polygamous practices of David and Solomon as justification for polygamy. But this is a very direct contradiction to the teachings of the Book of Mormon. The Book of Mormon also contradicts the Doctrine & Covenants.

Jacob 2:23-24 **(PDF LDS Scripture pg. 139)**

> "But the word of God burdens me because of your grosser crimes. For behold, thus saith the Lord: This people begin to wax in iniquity; they understand not the scriptures, for they seek to excuse themselves in committing whoredoms, because of the things which were written concerning David, and Solomon his son. Behold, David and Solomon truly had many wives and concubines, which thing was abdominable before me, saith the Lord."[E]

D&C 132:1 **(PDF LDS Scripture pg. 832)**

> "Verily, thus saith the Lord unto you my servant Joseph, that inasmuch as you have inquired of my hand to know and understand wherein I, the Lord, justified my servants Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, as also Moses, David and Solomon, my servants, as touching the principle and doctrine of their having many wives and concubines…"[E]

D&C 132:39 **(PDF LDS Scripture pg. 836)**

> "David's wives and concubines were given unto him of me, by the hand of Nathan, my servant, and others of the prophets who had the keys of this power; and in none of these things did he sin against me save in the case of Uriah and his wife; and, therefore he hath fallen from his exaltation, and received his portion; and he shall not inherit them out of the world, for I gave them unto another, saith the Lord." [E]

We have read that Brigham Young said that you have to practice polygamy to become a God. The Bible says a church leader should only have one wife. The ***Book of Mormon*** and ***Doctrine and Covenants*** contradict each other on the same subject! If you have to be married in the L.D.S. temple to reach exaltation, why, then, did Jesus say the following?

Matthew 22:30

> "For in the resurrection they neither marry, nor are given in marriage, but are like angels in heaven."

Matthew 19:12

> "For there are eunuchs who were born that way from their mother's womb; and there are eunuchs who were made eunuchs by men; and there are also eunuchs who made themselves eunuchs for the sake of the kingdom of heaven. He who is able to accept this, let him accept it."

I would think that Jesus would want me to reach exaltation. But according to His statement, I would say that He is either not concerned about this, or it is not true that I must be married in the L.D.S. temple to reach exhalation. Or, perhaps there is no exaltation.

Paul also said things that would seem to conflict with this Mormon concept.

1 Corinthians 7:8

> "But I say to the unmarried and to widows that it is good for them if they remain even as I."

Corinthians 7:32-33

> "But I want you to be free from concern. One who is unmarried is concerned about the things of the Lord, how he may please the Lord; but one who is married is concerned about the things of the world, how he may please his wife…"

Now, I know there is nothing wrong with being married, as Paul also said in this chapter. But the verses do seem to conflict with the idea that one must be married in the L.D.S. temple in order to reach exaltation. If a person must be married in the temple why would Paul say that it is good to be single, and able to focus more on the Lord?

It's true that the L.D.S. church no longer practices polygamy. I bring the topic up only to show that such "theology" came from a man who claimed to be a prophet of God. Likewise, the fact that the ***Book of Mormon*** and ***Doctrine and Covenants*** contradict each other is significant, because they too are regarded as the word of God to L.D.S ***D&C*** also contradicts ***The Holy Bible***.

D&C 132:65 **(PDF LDS Scripture pg. 839)**

> "Therefore, it shall be lawful in me, if she receive not this law, for him to receive all things whatsoever I, the Lord his God, will give unto him, because she did not believe and administer unto him according to my word; and she then becomes the transgressor; and he is exempt from the law of Sarah, who administered unto Abraham according to the law when I commanded Abraham to take Hagar to wife." [E]

The Bible says nothing about God commanding Abraham to take Hagar to wife. Rather, we are told Abram listened to Sarai.

Genesis 16:2

> "So Sarai said to Abram, 'Now behold, the LORD has prevented me from bearing children. Please go in to my maid; perhaps I shall obtain children through her.' And Abram listened to the voice of Sarai."

In verse 5 it is clear that Abram and Sarai sinned in this matter.

Genesis 16:5

> "And Sarai said to Abram, 'May the wrong done me be upon you. I gave my maid into your arms; but when she saw that she had conceived, I was despised in her sight. May the LORD judge between you and me.'"

Although some of the kings in the Old Testament had many wives, the Bible itself condemned this practice.

Deuteronomy 17:17

> "Neither shall he multiply wives for himself, lest his heart turn away; nor shall he greatly increase silver and gold for himself."

There is no mention of any of the Apostles practicing polygamy.1 Timothy 3:2-12 and Titus 1:5-6 indicate that they should only have one wife. Just because some people are recorded in the Old Testament as practicing polygamy does not mean that the practice is right, in the sight of God.
When a book such as ***Doctrine and Covenants*** or ***Book of Mormon*** contradicts the Bible, rest assured that it is not the Bible that is wrong.

Journal of Discourses, Vol.11, pgs.127-128 **(PDF pg. 136)**

> "Brigham Young, June 18, 1865

"The founders of that ancient empire were robbers and women stealers, and made laws favoring monogamy in consequence of the scarcity of women among them, and hence this monogamic system which now prevails throughout all Christendom, and which has been so fruitful a source of prostitution and whoredom throughout all the Christian monogamic cities of the Old and New World, until rottenness and decay are at the root of their institutions both national and religious. Polygamy did not have its origin with Joseph Smith, but it existed from the beginning. So far as I am concerned as an individual, I did not ask for it; I never desired it; and if I ever had a trial of my faith in the world, it was when Joseph Smith revealed that doctrine to me; and I had to pray incessantly and exercise faith before the Lord until He revealed to me the truth, and I was satisfied. I say this at the present time for the satisfaction of both saint and sinner. Now, here are the commandments of the Lord, and here are the wishes of wicked men, which shall we obey? It is the Lord and them for it." **E9**
(Does this sound like a prophet of God to you?)

Journal of Discourses, Vol.1, pgs.50-51 **(PDF pg. 58)**

> "Brigham Young, April 9, 1852

"Now hear it, O inhabitants of the earth, Jew and Gentile, Saint and sinner! When our father Adam came into the garden of Eden, he came into it with a celestial body, and brought Eve, one of his wives, with him." **E9**

This is a different story from that which is related in Genesis. According to the Bible, God created Adam and Eve.

Compare what Joseph F. Smith says in the next two statements to what Brigham Young said ("The only men who become Gods, even the Sons of God, are those who enter into polygamy." **E9** —***Journal of Discourses, Vol.11***, pgs.268-269). **(PDF pg. 277)**

Journal of Discourses, Vol.20, pgs.29-30 **(PDF pg. 37)**

"Joseph F. Smith, July 7, 1878

"If, then, this principle was of such great importance that the Prophet himself was threatened with destruction, and the best men in the Church with being excluded from the favor of the Almighty, if they did not enter into and establish the practice of it upon the earth, it is useless to tell me that there is no blessing attached to obedience to the law, or that a man with only one wife can obtain as great a reward, glory or kingdom as he can with more than one, being equally faithful." **E9**

Journal of Discourses, Vol.20, pg.31 **(PDF pg. 39)**

"Joseph F. Smith, July 7, 1878

"I understand the law of celestial marriage to mean that every man in this Church, who has the ability to obey and practice it in righteousness and will not, shall be damned, I say I understand it to mean this and nothing less, and I testify in the name of Jesus that it does mean that." **E9**

I understand that some of these statements might seem offensive to you. I did not copy this to offend the reader, but rather to point out that Joseph Smith and Brigham Young are not prophets of God. I came to this conclusion because of their own statements. It is not wrong for me to point out L.D.S scriptures in contradiction with each other; all truth should be able to stand the test. The Bible has had numerous critics, and the truth of it shines all the more. This will continue to be true, because the Bible is the Word of God.

To the Mormon the matter of priesthood authority is very important. Yet their concept of the Aaronic and Melchezidek priesthoods are not biblical.

You can click on "Priesthood" to start reading at the beginning of this topic or use the Topic Index to jump to the part that interest you most.

Overview of content in this section is as follows:

PRIESTHOOD (pg. 416)

Priesthood authority (pg. 416)

Patterned after the primitive Church? (pg. 417)

A Biblical look at the priesthood (pg. 419)

Commentary on Hebrews (pg. 421)

Purpose of the Law & Priesthood (pg. 428)

Jesus is The Way, and I Am Complete in Christ (pg. 430)

John the Baptist could not have given Joseph Smith the priesthood. (pg. 430)

Melchizedek Priesthood not Transferable (pg. 431)

"Holy" or "Royal" Priesthood (pg. 431)

Everlasting Priesthood in Old Testament Did Indeed End (pg. 432)

PRIESTHOOD

To the Mormon, the matter of priesthood authority is very important. It is believed that without the priesthood authority, certain acts (such as baptism) are meaningless. The claim is that the Aaronic and Melchezidek priesthoods were restored and exist only within the Mormon Church; the same organization that existed in the primitive church prevails now in the L.D.S. church.

The first apparent problem with this line of thought is that that the Mormon Church is not patterned after the early church, as we see in the New Testament. Add to this that according to the Bible, the Aaronic priesthood, after the order of Aaron (properly referred to as the Levitical priesthood), became obsolete. This was due to the complete fulfillment of the priesthood by Jesus Christ dying on the cross and becoming our only mediator with God the Father.

Furthermore, the Melchizidek priesthood is only stated to be present now in Jesus Christ. Jesus is said to hold this office forever. We have no need for the office of this priesthood to be passed to a successor, since Jesus lives forever.

Following are some references from the Mormons showing their view of the priesthood.

Encyclopedia of Mormonism, Vol. 3
"PRIESTHOOD
The word 'priesthood' has several meanings for Latter-day Saints:

> Priesthood is power, the power of God, a vital source of eternal strength and energy delegated to men to act in all things for the well-being of mankind, both in the world and out of it (DS 3:80; Romney, p. 43).
>
> Priesthood is authority, the exclusive right to act in the name of God as his authorized agents and to perform ordinances for the purpose of opening certain spiritual blessings to all individuals.
>
> Priesthood is the right and responsibility to preside within the organizational structure of the Church, but only in a manner consistent with the agency of others.
>
> Sometimes the word priesthood is used to refer to the men of the Church in general (as in 'the priesthood will meet in the chapel')."[E10]

The Teachings of Spencer W. Kimball, pg.494

> "Priesthood is only in the restored Church. There is no priesthood anywhere else today than in this restored Church. There is priestcraft, but no priesthood." [E21]

Mormon Doctrine, by Bruce McConkie, pg.140 **(PDF pg.53)**

> "the same organization that existed in the primitive Church prevails now. (Sixth Article of Faith)."[E6]

Mormonism Shadow or Reality? Page 197
Mormon missionary handbook, ***A Uniform System for Teaching Investigators***, pg.15

"Elder: Why is the Priesthood so important?
"Brown: Because a man must have it to do those things.
"Elder: He certainly must. Suppose a priest or minister baptizes without the priesthood, what does that mean in the sight of the Lord?
"Brown: It doesn't mean anything.
"Elder: Why is that?
"Brown: Because he would lack the necessary authority.
"Elder: Right. So even though a minister might be sincere, unless he has the priesthood, will the Lord recognize a baptism performed by him?
"Brown: No."[A34]

In the Bible, Jesus once rebuked John for having a belief similar to this.

Luke 9:49-50

> "And John answered and said, 'Master, we saw someone casting out demons in Your name; and we tried to hinder him because he does not follow along with us.' But Jesus said to him, 'Do not hinder him; for he who is not against you is for you.'"

Topic Index

As previously stated, **the Mormon Church is not patterned after the early church** in the New Testament. For example, the L.D.S church is led by First Presidency; The Bible says nothing about a First Presidency. Even if we accept that there should today be twelve apostles, this still presents the problem that the L.D.S church has three additional men serving in the First Presidency, in addition to the "Council of the 12". How is this patterned after the primitive church?

In the L.D.S church, 12-year-old boys are ordained Deacons. But in the Bible we see that deacons are not 12-year old boys.

1Timothy 3:12

> *"Let deacons be husbands of only one wife, and good managers of their children and their own households."*

Even the Mormons' own scripture would suggest that Deacons should be older than 12 years of age:

D&C 84:111 **(LDS Scripture pg. 727)**

> **"***And behold, the high priests should travel, and also the elders, and also the lesser priests; but the deacons and teachers should be appointed to watch over the church, to be standing ministers unto the church***."**[E]

L.D.S. scripture claims that "Elder" is an office in the Melchizedek Priesthood, although the Melchizedek priesthood is never associated with the office of an elder in the Bible.

D&C 107:7 **(LDS Scripture pg. 782)**

> "The office of an Elder comes under the priesthood of Melchizedek."[E]

It is interesting that although Mormons claim that the priesthood is absolutely necessary, none of the leaders in Mormon Church had it in the beginning. The following is a statement by Joseph Smith concerning a conference held in June, 1831.

History of the Church, Vol.1, Ch.15, pg.175 **(PDF pg. 17)**

> "…the authority of the Melchizedek Priesthood was manifested and conferred for the first time upon several of the Elders." **E7**

This is confirmed by John Whitmer. He was the Church Historian.

Book of John Whitmer, typescript, BYU-A, pgs.8-9

> "June 3, 1831, a general conference was called, and a blessing promised, if the elders were faithful, and humble before him. Therefore, the elders assembled from the East and the West, from the North and the South. And also many members. Conference was opened by prayer and exhortation by Joseph Smith, Jr., the Revelator. After the business of the Church was attended to according to the covenants. **The Lord made manifest to Joseph that it was necessary that such of the elders as were considered worthy, should be ordained to the High Priesthood**. The spirit of the Lord fell upon Joseph in an unusual manner. And prophesied that John the Revelator was then among the ten tribes of Israel who had been led away by Salmanasar King of Israel [should be Assyria], to prepare them for their return, from their long dispersion, to again possess the land of their fathers. He prophesied many more things that I have not written. After he had prophesied he laid his hands upon Lyman Wight [and ordained him] to the High Priesthood after the Holy Order of God. And the spirit fell upon Lyman, and he prophesied, concerning the coming of Christ, he said that there were some in the congregation that should live until the Savior should descend from heaven, with a shout, with all the holy angels with him." **E29**

If the Melchizedek priesthood is really necessary, it is certainly odd that the Elders were able to function from the organization of the church until June 1831 without it. The historian B.H Roberts made the following admission concerning the restoration of the Melchizedek priesthood.

The Seventy's Course in Theology, Second Year, pg.218 **(PDF pg. 218)**

> "The Line of the Restoration of the Melchizedek Priesthood: The promise to confer upon Joseph and Oliver the Melchizedek Priesthood was fulfilled; but as there is no definite account of the event in the history of the Prophet Joseph, or, for matter of that, in any of our annuals, the evidences of the fact of their ordination to the higher or Melchizedek priesthood promised them by John the Baptist, are presented now, together with a consideration of the place where, and the time when, the great event occurred." **E30**

One should keep in mind that the Melchizedek Priesthood could only be passed on by someone who had it. Only Jesus and Melchizedek are ever said to have had it in the Bible. Neither Jesus, nor Melchizedek, are said to have been the ones to restore it to the L.D.S church.

Journal of Discourses, Vol.10, by Heber C. Kimball, November 29, 1864, pgs.370-372

> "Joseph was a kind-hearted, obedient, good boy. He was fourteen years of age the third day of last April, and was an excellent scholar; … Joseph was never cross, he was always pleasant to all persons. Eight years ago he came near dying; I was impressed to ordain him a High Priest. I ordained him, and I do know that had a saving effect upon the boy."**E9 (PDF 377-379)**

Notice that we are told that Smith was fourteen years old; eight years before this, he was ordained a High Priest. That means this boy Joseph was ordained a High Priest at age six. This is not patterned after the primitive church, as claimed in McConkie's book ***Mormon Doctrine and the 6th Article of Faith***.

Topic Index

A Biblical look at the priesthood

The fact that the structure is not patterned after the primitive church is only the beginning of the problems. Let's look at what the Bible says in Hebrews, chapters 7-10. It says the Levitical priesthood, which is after the order of Aaron, ended. Our High Priest, after the order Melchizedek, is Jesus Christ; nobody else has this priesthood. The only other priesthood mentioned in the Bible after the priesthood ended is called a "holy" or "royal" priesthood. This is found in 1 Peter 1:23-2:9, in the context born-again believers have this priesthood.

First I will start with Hebrews and Genesis. What ended in the book of Hebrews is the Levitical Priesthood, after the order of Aaron. There is nothing called the "Aaronic priesthood" in the Bible. In fact the word "Aaronic" is not in the Bible. The word "Melchizedek" or "Melchisedec", as in the KJV, is only found in Genesis 14:18, Psalm 110:4, and the book of Hebrews 5:6 and 10; 6:20; and 7:1, 10,11,15,17. The reference in Psalm is prophetically speaking, concerning Jesus. Genesis refers to an actual person called Melchizedek.

Nothing is said about Melchizedek's origin in Genesis. We have no mention of his Mom or Dad. This is strange, because Genesis is a book of families. When we see a man mentioned who is important in the genealogical line (as this man Melchizedek seems to be) his Mother and Father are mentioned: "he is the son of …", or, "these are the generations of …". But we do not have the generations of Melchizedek. The writer of Hebrews makes it clear that the reason there is no record of Melchizedek's family line is because the priesthood of Jesus Christ in its inception is after the order of Melchizedek.

The priesthood of Jesus is after the order of Melchizedek in the practical sense, as Jesus is our mediator (Hebrews 9:15). Just as the priest in the Old Testament acted as a mediator by entering the holy of holies to offer sacrifice for the people's sins, Jesus offered Himself as the sacrifice for our sins, and is the mediator between Christians and the Father. Christ in His priesthood does perpetually what was done in the Levitical priesthood after the order of Aaron. In His person, Jesus had no beginning or ending of days (John 1:1, Micah 5:2, Revelation 1:7-8, 1:17-18, 21:6, 22:13-16). Jesus has always existed.

In the person Melchizedek, we have a picture of the Lord Jesus Christ. Jesus had no beginning or ending of days, and neither did Melchizedek.

Hebrews 7:1-3

> "1) For this Melchizedek, king of Salem, priest of the Most High God, who met Abraham as he was returning from the slaughter of the kings and blessed him, 2) to whom also Abraham apportioned a tenth part of all the spoils was first of all, by the translation of his name king of righteousness, and then also king of Salem, which is king of peace. 3) Without father, without mother, without genealogy, having neither beginning of days nor end of life, but made like the Son of God, he abides a priest perpetually."

We are told here that Melchizedek is a priest perpetually. The same is true of Jesus (Hebrews 7:17):"***For it is witnessed of Him 'Thou art a priest forever According to the order of Melchizedek.'"*** Another contrast is Melchizedek as "king of peace" (Hebrews 7:2). Jesus is called "prince of peace". Melchizedek was called a "great man" (Hebrews 7:4); Jesus certainly fits this description also. These two Melchizedek, who seem to be a picture of Christ and Jesus, are the only ones in the Bible to hold the Melchizedek priesthood.

Why do you suppose Melchizedek brought forth bread and wine in Genesis 14:18?

Genesis 14:18-20

> "And Melchizedek king of Salem brought out bread and wine; now he was a priest of God Most High. And he blessed him and said, 'Blessed be Abram of God Most High, Possessor of heaven and earth; And blessed be God Most High, who has delivered your enemies into your hand.' And he gave him a tenth of all."

I believe it is because as it says in 1 Corinthians 11:26: ***"For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until He comes***." The Sacrament is taken today in symbolism of the Lord's death. It stands to reason that it was taken then as a symbolic gesture of what was to come (Christ's death for all sins). The Lord Jesus is the great High Priest for the world today. The Lord Jesus is after the order of Melchizedek, not after the order of Aaron. The Levitical priesthood after the order of Aaron was for Israel, and the sacrifices were done away with. There is no more need for sacrifice because the blood of Jesus covers all sin (1 John 1:7).

Topic Index

There are some verses I want to comment on. I feel that they are important. You should read Hebrews Chapters 7-10 several times, to become familiar with the context. It tells us Jesus Christ is our High Priest and the Levitical Priesthood, or the Aaronic Priesthood, as the L.D.S. would call it, has ended. There is no more need for it because Jesus was the ultimate sacrifice and He takes its place as our mediator. The writer of Hebrews makes a comparison and contrast of the priesthood of Melchizedek and the priesthood after the order of Aaron.

The text is from the New American Standard Version of the ***Holy Bible***, and my commentary concerning the text follows in a different font.

HEBREWS CHAPTER 7

1 For this Melchizedek, king of Salem, priest of the Most High God, who met Abraham as he was returning from the slaughter of the kings and blessed him,

2 to whom also Abraham apportioned a tenth part of all the spoils was first of all, by the translation of his name king of righteousness, and then also king of Salem, which is king of peace.

3 Without father, without mother, without genealogy, having neither beginning of days nor end of life, but made like the Son of God, he abides a priest perpetually.

4 Now observe how great this man was to whom Abraham, the patriarch, gave a tenth of the choicest spoils.

5 And those indeed of the sons of Levi who receive the priest's office have commandment in the Law to collect a tenth from the people, that is, from their brethren, although these are descended from Abraham.

Verse 4 Abraham paid tithes to Melchizedek. He recognized that Melchizedek was above him and that he was the priest of the most high God.
Verse 5 The sons of Levi, who were descended from Abraham, collected tithes from their brethren. But Abraham paid tithes to Melchizedek. This shows us that positional Melchizedek was superior to Aaron and his family.

6 But the one whose genealogy is not traced from them collected a tenth from Abraham, and blessed the one who had the promises.

7 But without any dispute the lesser is blessed by the greater.

8 And in this case mortal men receive tithes, but in that case one receives them of whom it is witnessed that he lives on.

9 And, so to speak, through Abraham even Levi, who received tithes, paid tithes,

10 for he was still in the loins of his father when Melchizedek met him.

11 Now if perfection was through the Levitical priesthood (for on the basis of it the people received the Law), what further need was there for another priest to arise according to the order of Melchizedek, and not be designated according to the order of Aaron?

12 For when the priesthood is changed, of necessity there takes place a change of law also.

Verse 8 "in this case" refers to the Levitical priest; "in that case" refers to Melchizedek and his priesthood (“Here” and “there” in KJV).
Verse 11 indicates to us that the Levitical, or Aaronic, priesthood was incomplete. It never brought perfection, complete communion with God. It never gave redemption and acceptance before God to the people. Therefore, we need Christ.
Verse 12 The change in law. We are not under Mosaic Law. The Mosaic Law and the Levitical or Aaronic priesthood go together. They offered blood sacrifices that we do not as Christ is our Passover.1 Corinthians 5:7—His sacrifice is what Christians claim for atonement of sins.

13 For the one concerning whom these things are spoken belongs to another tribe, from which no one has officiated at the altar.

14 For it is evident that our Lord was descended from Judah, a tribe with reference to which Moses spoke nothing concerning priests.

15 And this is clearer still, if another priest arises according to the likeness of Melchizedek,

16 who has become such not on the basis of a law of physical requirement, but according to the power of an indestructible life.

17 For it is witnessed of Him"Thou art a priest forever According to the order of Melchizedek."

18 For, on the one hand, there is a setting aside of a former commandment because of its weakness and uselessness

19 (for the Law made nothing perfect), and on the other hand there is a bringing in of a better hope, through which we draw near to God.

20 And inasmuch as it was not without an oath

21 (for they indeed became priests without an oath, but He with an oath through the One who said to Him, "The Lord has sworn And will not change His mind, 'Thou art a priest forever'");
22 so much the more also Jesus has become the guarantee of a better covenant.

Verses 13-14 Jesus came from the tribe of Judah, therefore He could never have been a priest here on earth. Only certain Levites could hold the Levitical or Aaronic priesthood in the Old Testament. The priesthood, however, was changed, and Christ is after the order of Melchizedek.
Verse 15 This priest to rise in the order of Melchizedek is a fulfillment of the prophecy in Psalm 110:4
Verses 16-17 Christ became a priest according to the order of Melchizedek. Since He rose from the dead He has endless life.
Verse 18 The Levitical system was faulty. It never gave mankind what he needed. Its weakness was man himself, as we will see in verse 28.

23 And the former priests, on the one hand, existed in greater numbers, because they were prevented by death from continuing,
24 but He, on the other hand, because He abides forever, holds His priesthood permanently.
25 Hence, also, He is able to save forever those who draw near to God through Him, since He always lives to make intercession for them.
26 For it was fitting that we should have such a high priest, holy, innocent, undefiled, separated from sinners and exalted above the heavens;
27 who does not need daily, like those high priests, to offer up sacrifices, first for His own sins, and then for the sins of the people, because this He did once for all when He offered up Himself.
28 For the Law appoints men as high priests who are weak, but the word of the oath, which came after the Law, appoints a Son, made perfect forever.

Verse 23 In other words, the men in Levitical or Aaronic priesthood would die.
Verse 24 Jesus is our High Priest now, and He will never die; His priesthood lasts forever.

HEBREWS CHAPTER 8

1 Now the main point in what has been said is this: we have such a high priest, who has taken His seat at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens,
2 a minister in the sanctuary, and in the true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched, not man.
3 For every high priest is appointed to offer both gifts and sacrifices; hence it is necessary that this high priest also have something to offer.
4 Now if He were on earth, He would not be a priest at all, since there are those who offer the gifts according to the Law;

Verses 1-3 The main point in what has been said is that a priest must have something to offer. Jesus sacrificed Himself once, for all time. In verse 2 we see that man made a tabernacle, built by hands of man. This tabernacle in heaven was not made by man.

5 who serve a copy and shadow of the heavenly things, just as Moses was warned by God when he was about to erect the tabernacle; for, "See," He says, "that you make all things according to the pattern which was shown you on the mountain."

6 But now He has obtained a more excellent ministry, by as much as He is also the mediator of a better covenant, which has been enacted on better promises.

7 For if that first covenant had been faultless, there would have been no occasion sought for a second.

8 For finding fault with them, He says, "Behold, days are coming, says the Lord, when I will effect a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah;

9 Not like the covenant which I made with their fathers on the day when I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt; for they did not continue in My covenant, and I did not care for them, says the Lord.

10 "For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the Lord: I will put My laws into their minds, and I will write them upon their hearts. And I will be their God, and they shall be My people.

Verse 6 Christ mediates in a much better covenant (Christ's blood is at the base of this new covenant).
Verse 7 If the first covenant (the Levitical system, or Aaronic Priesthood) had been faultless, there would be no need for the new covenant.
Verse 8 God found fault with this system and declared there would come a time He would establish a new and better covenant.
Verse 10 The new covenant is not the Mosaic law, but the law is found in the hearts and minds of His people.

11 "And they shall not teach everyone his fellow citizen, and everyone his brother, saying, 'Know the Lord,' for all shall know me, from the least to the greatest of them.

12 "For I will be merciful to their iniquities, and I will remember their sins no more."

When He said, "A new covenant" He has made the first obsolete. But whatever is becoming obsolete and growing old is ready to disappear.

Verses 11-12 He will remember their sins no more. Why? This is because Christ paid for them on the cross. Verse 11 says, "Know the Lord". To even come to the Lord, the people had to go through the priest to God. Man now goes straight through Jesus, our High Priest, Who made a sacrifice on our behalf that lasts forever. Of course, you must accept this sacrifice (John 3:16-17).

Verse 13 Notice the word obsolete**.** What is obsolete? The context in Chapters 7-8 was the Aaronic priesthood; this is obsolete. The Levitical system that required us to go through the priest or priesthood to come to God is obsolete. The KJV of this verse reads, "In that he saith, A new covenant, he hath made the first old. Now that which decayeth and waxeth old is ready to vanish away."The Aaronic priesthood decayed, waxed old and vanished away. It is now obsolete.

HEBREWS CHAPTER 9

1 Now even the first covenant had regulations of divine worship and the earthly sanctuary.
2 For there was a tabernacle prepared, the outer one, in which were the lampstand and the table and the sacred bread; this is called the holy place.
3 And behind the second veil, there was a tabernacle which is called the Holy of Holies,
4 having a golden altar of incense and the ark of the covenant covered on all sides with gold, in which was a golden jar holding the manna, and Aaron's rod which budded, and the tables of the covenant.
5 And above it were the cherubim of glory overshadowing the mercy seat; but of these things we cannot now speak in detail.
6 Now when these things have been thus prepared, the priests are continually entering the outer tabernacle, performing the divine worship,
7 but into the second only the high priest enters once a year, not without taking blood, which he offers for himself and for the sins of the people committed in ignorance.
8 The Holy Spirit is signifying this, that the way into the holy place has not yet been disclosed, while the outer tabernacle is still standing,
9 which is a symbol for the present time. Accordingly both gifts and sacrifices are offered which cannot make the worshiper perfect in conscience,
10 since they relate only to food and drink and various washings, regulations for the body imposed until a time of reformation.
11 But when Christ appeared as a high priest of the good things to come, He entered through the greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this creation;
12 and not through the blood of goats and calves, but through His own blood, He entered the holy place once for all, having obtained eternal redemption.
13 For if the blood of goats and bulls and the ashes of a heifer sprinkling those who have been defiled, sanctify for the cleansing of the flesh,
14 how much more will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without blemish to God, cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?

Verses 1-10 explain the earthly priesthood.
Verses 11-14 explain Christ's priesthood. Notice verse 12: "…once for all, having obtained eternal redemption."

15 And for this reason He is the mediator of a new covenant, in order that since a death has taken place for the redemption of the transgressions that were committed under the first covenant, those who have been called may receive the promise of the eternal inheritance.

Verse 15 Jesus is the mediator of the New Covenant.

16 For where a covenant is, there must of necessity be the death of the one who made it.

17 For a covenant is valid only when men are dead, for it is never in force while the one who made it lives.

18 Therefore even the first covenant was not inaugurated without blood.

19 For when every commandment had been spoken by Moses to all the people according to the Law, he took the blood of the calves and the goats, with water and scarlet wool and hyssop, and sprinkled both the book itself and all the people,

20 saying, "This is the blood of the covenant which God commanded you."

21 And in the same way he sprinkled both the tabernacle and all the vessels of the ministry with the blood.

22 And according to the Law, one may almost say all things are cleansed with blood, and without shedding of blood there is no forgiveness.

23 Therefore it was necessary for the copies of the things in the heavens to be cleansed with these, but the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these.

24 For Christ did not enter a holy place made with hands, a mere copy of the true one, but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us;

25 nor was it that He should offer Himself often, as the high priest enters the holy place year by year with blood not his own.

26 Otherwise, He would have needed to suffer often since the foundation of the world; but now once at the consummation of the ages He has been manifested to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself.

27 And inasmuch as it is appointed for men to die once and after this comes judgment,

28 so Christ also, having been offered once to bear the sins of many, shall appear a second time for salvation without reference to sin, to those who eagerly await Him.

HEBREWS CHAPTER 10

1 For the Law, since it has only a shadow of the good things to come and not the very form of things, can never by the same sacrifices year by year, which they offer continually, make perfect those who draw near.

2 Otherwise, would they not have ceased to be offered, because the worshipers, having once been cleansed, would no longer have had consciousness of sins?

3 But in those sacrifices there is a reminder of sins year by year.

4 For it is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins.

5 Therefore, when He comes into the world, He says, "Sacrifice and offering Thou hast not desired,but a body Thou hast prepared for me;

6 In whole burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin Thou hast taken no pleasure.

7 "Then I said, 'Behold, I have come (in the roll of the book it is written of me) to do Thy will, O God.'"

8 After saying above, "Sacrifices and offerings and whole burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin Thou hast not desired, nor hast Thou taken pleasure in them (which are offered according to the Law),

9 then He said, "Behold, I have come to do Thy will." He takes away the first in order to establish the second.

10 By this will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.

11 And every priest stands daily ministering and offering time after time the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins;

12 but He, having offered one sacrifice for sins for all time, sat down at the right hand of God,

13 waiting from that time onward until His enemies be made a footstool for His feet.

14 For by one offering He has perfected for all time those who are sanctified.

15 And the Holy Spirit also bears witness to us; for after saying,

16 "This is the covenant that I will make with them After those days, says the Lord: I will put My laws upon their heart, and upon their mind I will write them," He then says

17 "And their sins and their lawless deeds I will remember no more."

18 Now where there is forgiveness of these things, there is no longer any offering for sin.

19 Since therefore, brethren, we have confidence to enter the holy place by the blood of Jesus,

20 by a new and living way which He inaugurated for us through the veil, that is, His flesh,

21 and since we have a great priest over the house of God,

22 let us draw near with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water.

23 Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful;

24 and let us consider how to stimulate one another to love and good deeds,

25 not forsaking our own assembling together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another and all the more, as you see the day drawing near.

26 For if we go on sinning willfully after receiving the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins,

27 but a certain terrifying expectation of judgment, and the fury of a fire which will consume the adversaries.

28 Anyone who has set aside the Law of Moses dies without mercy on the testimony of two or three witnesses.

Verses 16-18 The New Covenant is not under the law of the Old Testament. This is different.

29 How much severer punishment do you think he will deserve who has trampled underfoot the Son of God, and has regarded as unclean the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified, and has insulted the Spirit of grace?

30 For we know Him who said, "Vengeance is Mine, I will repay." And again, "The Lord will judge His people."

31 It is a terrifying thing to fall into the hands of the living God.

32 But remember the former days, when, after being enlightened, you endured a great conflict of sufferings,

33 partly, by being made a public spectacle through reproaches and tribulations, and partly by becoming sharers with those who were so treated.

34 For you showed sympathy to the prisoners, and accepted joyfully the seizure of your property, knowing that you have for yourselves a better possession and an abiding one.

35 Therefore, do not throw away your confidence, which has a great reward.

36 For you have need of endurance, so that when you have done the will of God, you may receive what was promised.

37 For yet in a very little while, He who is coming will come, and will not delay.

38 But My righteous one shall live by faith; and if he shrinks back, My soul has no pleasure in him.

39 But we are not of those who shrink back to destruction, but of those who have faith to the preserving of the soul.

END OF CHAPTER

Here is what we have: the Aaronic priesthood and the Mosaic Law ended. They were replaced because they were not complete. Man had to go through a priest to God, and the priest had to continually offer sacrifices, which were not complete or sufficient. Christ offered Himself once for all time and His priesthood is after the order of the Melchidezek, which is everlasting. Jesus is our High Priest forever. The Levitical or Aaronic priesthood passed away. Jesus Christ, who still is our High Priest, took its place when He offered His sacrifice on our behalf, once and for all time.

What need is there to restore then what God done away with?

Topic Index

The Priesthood's purpose was to provide a way in which man could come to God. For this there had to be a blood offering (Hebrews 9:22). Christ's substitutional sacrifice on the cross fulfilled this requirement for all time. And remember, only the Levites could hold the priesthood (all Mormons are not Levites).

Paul mentions the New Covenant in 2 Corinthians 3:6:"…who also made us adequate as servants of a new covenant, not of the letter, but of the Spirit; for the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life." "The letter" means the entire Mosaic law; it kills because in and of itself, it could not give life.

The new covenant is the message of the grace in Christ.

Matthew 26:28

> "…for this is My blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for forgiveness of sins."

Acts 13:39

> "…and through Him everyone who believes is freed from all things, from which you could not be freed through the Law of Moses."

The law was to define sin and make man conscious of it. This made man legally guilty.

Galatians 3:21-25

> "Is the Law then contrary to the promises of God? May it never be! For if a law had been given which was able to impart life, then righteousness would indeed have been based on law. But the Scripture has shut up all men under sin,that the promise by faith in Jesus Christ might be given to those who believe. But before faith came, we were kept in custody under the law, being shut up to the faith which was later to be revealed. Therefore the Law has become our tutor to lead us to Christ, that we may be justified by faith. But now that faith has come, we are no longer under a tutor."

Timothy 1:9

> "…realizing the fact that law is not made for a righteous man, but for those who are lawless and rebellious, for the ungodly and sinners, for the unholy and profane, for those who kill their fathers or mothers, for murderers…"

The spirit by contrast gives life to believers. Man cannot live the law, no matter how hard he tries. This is why we need to rely on the blood of Christ and His grace.

The veil that tore in the temple at the time of Christ's death (Matthew 27:51) was ripped from top to bottom. This signified that a new and living way was now open for man to come to God (Hebrews 10:20 and Ephesians 2:11-12).

I am complete in Christ

Jesus said:

I am the vine (John 15:1-5)
I am the way, the truth, and the life (John 14:6)
I am the resurrection and the life (John 11:25)
I am the good shepherd (John 10:11-14)
I am the bread of life (John 6:35-48)
I am the light of the world (John 8:12)
I am the door (John 10:7-9)

Consider John 3:16: "For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life." Jesus is the way to eternal life with God — not a church, a priesthood, baptism, or anything else

Colossians 2:8-10

> "See to it that no one takes you captive through philosophy and empty deception, according to the tradition of men, according to the elementary principles of the world, rather than according to Christ. For in Him all the fulness of Deity dwells in bodily form, and in Him you have been made complete, and He is the head over all rule and authority…"
>
> Since I am complete in Christ, why do I need anything else?

Topic Index

There are two more errors I must mention. (1) It is maintained that Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery received the Aaronic priesthood from John the Baptist on May 15, 1829. The most obvious problem with this claim is that Scripture does not claim that John the Baptist ever had the priesthood. I have not been able to locate any Biblical reference in which John the Baptist did any temple duties, or any of the duties of a priest.

Also I want to point out, in Hebrews 7:24, the word "permanently" (NAS; “unchangeable” in KJV).

Hebrews 7:24
> “…but He, on the other hand, because He abides forever, holds His priesthood permanently.”

Looking at this word in the original Greek, you can see that it carries a note of finality. ***Strong's*** says the following: “531 aparabatos (ap-ar-ab'-at-os); from 1 (as a negative particle) and a derivative of 3845; not passing away, i.e. **untransferable** (perpetual): KJV unchangeable”; **C3**

Thayer's describes the word this way: “531 aparabatos-1) unviolated, not to be violated, inviolable; 2) unchangeable and therefore **not liable to pass to a successor**”. **C6**

If this Melchizedek priesthood is non-transferable and not liable to pass to a successor, how could the L.D.S. church have it?

Let’s not forget that the only places you will find the word "priesthood" in the New Testament are in Hebrews 7:5,11,12,14,24 and 1 Peter 2:5,9. Whenever you see the word "ordained" in the New Testament, it does not indicate that anybody was ordained to the priesthood — they were ordained to preach, or witness. Hebrews 8:3mentions priesthood, but the verse is referring to the High Priest of the Old Testament. While Acts 14:23 says there were ordained “Elders”, the position of Elder is a position of leadership in the church; **not** a position of priesthood. Nowhere in the New Testament do you see Elders, Bishops, or Deacons receiving the priesthood by the laying on of hands. This is a Mormon concept that does not come from the Bible.

Topic Index

In 1 Peter 2:5 and 9 we find a “holy” or “royal” priesthood, not an Aaronic or Melchizedek priesthood.

1 Peter 2:5
> "…you also, as living stones, are being built up as a spiritual house for a holy priesthood, to

1 Peter 1:23
"…for you have been born again not of seed which is perishable but imperishable, that is, through the living and abiding word of God."

The people being addressed in this verse are those who are born again, and are being built up as a spiritual house for a holy priesthood. You will recall that after Peter's confession Matt 16:16 "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." Then Jesus said to him "you are Peter, and upon this rock I will build My church" The name Peter means Rock. Jesus was saying to him in effect, you are going to be a little stone a pebble, but on this foundation stone (Christ 1Cor.3:11& 10:4) I am going to build my church. Jesus Christ is the Corner stone of the foundation 1 Peter 2:6. I believe Peter understood Jesus in this way because he (Peter) said "you also, as living stones, are being built up as a spiritual house" When you are born again you become a child of God and you become part of this spiritual house. Born again believers are the church and are called the body of Christ. Jesus told Nicodemus "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." John 3:3 The people that Peter was talking to in 1 Peter where the holy and royal priesthood are mentioned are born again. The only sense in which anyone will have a holy or royal priesthood is to be born again. All believers both male and female are born again. In the context we offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.

Topic Index

Everlasting Priesthood in Old Testament Did Indeed End

There are two verses in the Old Testament that may still confuse some.

Numbers 25:11-13 (KJV)

"Phinehas, the son of Eleazar, the son of Aaron the priest, hath turned my wrath away from the children of Israel, while he was zealous for my sake among them, that I consumed not the children of Israel in my jealousy. Wherefore say, Behold, I give unto him my covenant of peace: And he shall have it, and his seed after him, even the covenant of an everlasting priesthood; because he was zealous for his God, and made an atonement for the children of Israel."

Exodus 40:15 (KJV)

"And thou shalt anoint them, as thou didst anoint their father, that they may minister unto me in the priest's office: for their anointing shall surely be an everlasting priesthood throughout their generations."

Phinehas was Aaron's grandson, and because the Lord was pleased with him, the Levitical priesthood was channeled through him. As we have already discussed, the Levitical priesthood ends in the book of Hebrews. How can there be "an everlasting priesthood", if in fact the priesthood came to an end?

The answer lies within the meaning and use of the Hebrew word used in Exodus 40:15 and Numbers 25:13. More often than not, the word "everlasting" is used in the way that we would "expect". First let us look at four different sources as to the meaning of this Hebrew word. Then we will look at some Bible verses where this same Hebrew word is used. You can verify this by using your ***Strong's Concordance***.

Vine's Expository Dictionary of Biblical Words

"EVER, EVERLASTING

"`olam **^5769^,** "eternity; remotest time; perpetuity. This word has cognates in Ugaritic, Moabite, Phoenician, Aramaic, Arabic, and Akkadian. It appears about 440 times in biblical Hebrew and in all periods.

"First, in a few passages the word means 'eternity' in the sense of not being limited to the present. Thus, in <Eccl. 3:11> we read that God had bound man to time and given him the capacity to live 'above time' (i.e., to remember yesterday, plan for tomorrow, and consider abstract principles); yet He has not given him divine knowledge: 'He hath made everything beautiful in his time: also he hath set the world in their heart, so that no man can find out the work that God maketh from the beginning to the end.'…**the word is used hyperbolically meaning 'for a long time':** 'I have long time holden my peace; I have been still, and refrained myself….' This word may include all the time between the ancient beginning and the present:"[C4]

Brown-Driver-Briggs'

"**5769** `owlam or `olam – long duration, antiquity, futurity, forever, ever, everlasting, evermore, perpetual, old, ancient, world ancient time, long time (used of the past) (used of the future) forever, always continuous existence, perpetual everlasting, indefinite or unending future, eternity" [C7]

Strong's "**5769** `owlam (o-lawm'); or `olam (o-lawm'); from 5956; properly, concealed, i.e. the vanishing point; generally, time out of mind (past or future), i.e. (practically) eternity; frequentatively, adverbial (especially with prepositional prefix) always:

"KJV – always (-s), ancient (time), any more, continuance, eternal, (for, [n]) ever (-lasting, -more, of old), lasting, long (time), (of), old (time), perpetual, at any time, (beginning of the) world (+without end). Compare 5331, 5703." [C3]

International Standard Bible Encyclopedia, Electronic Database

"EVERLASTING

"(ev-er-last'-ing) (olam, `adh; aidios, aionios): 'Everlasting,' in strictness, is that which endures forever; either that which has no beginning and will have no end (in which sense it is applicable to God only), or that which, having a beginning, will have no end, but henceforth will exist forever (thus of beings created for immortality; see IMMORTALITY). Figuratively also the term is applied to objects of impressive stability and long duration, as mountains, hills (e.g. <Gen 49:26; Hab 3:6>)." **C1**

Looking at these four sources of this Hebrew word, we can see that the word "everlasting" can and often does mean literally "forever". However, this is not always the case in every instance. Now we'll look at the Bible to see where this same Hebrew word is used in a way that is not literally forever. You can use your ***Strong's Concordance*** for verification that these instances are indeed the same Hebrew word.

Genesis 49:26 (KJV)

> "The blessings of thy father have prevailed above the blessings of my progenitors unto the utmost bound of the everlasting hills: they shall be on the head of Joseph, and on the crown of the head of him that was separate from his brethren."

Habakkuk 3:6 (KJV)

> "He stood, and measured the earth: he beheld, and drove asunder the nations; and the everlasting mountains were scattered, the perpetual hills did bow: his ways are everlasting."

Are the hills going to literally last forever? According to Peter they will come to an end.

2 Peter 3:10 (KJV)

> "But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up."

What we have here is the same Hebrew word in two instances being used to describe an “everlasting” priesthood. Then this same Hebrew word is used to describe “everlasting” hills or mountains. The New Testament tells us the Priesthood came to an end, and it also tells us the mountains will come to an end. The Hebrew word by definition can be used for eternity, or to indicate an extended period of time. The priesthood and the mountains are examples of the word being used in the latter context.

In summary, Phinehas was Aaron's grandson, and because the Lord was pleased with him, the Levitical priesthood was channeled through him. In this case the word "everlasting" indicated a long period of time. This was actually a couple thousand years, but it did come to an end in the book of Hebrews, when Jesus paid the ultimate and final sacrifice for our sins. After the Levitical Priesthood ended, all we have is the Melchizedek priesthood, which only Jesus Christ holds, and that which is referred to as a holy priesthood or a royal priesthood, which when you examine the context, belongs to born again believers.

Topic Index

Should we trust Mormon Leaders like Joseph Smith or Brigham Young? What about more current L.D.S Leaders like Gordon B Hinckley? I was raised a Mormon myself yet I came to the conclusion that the answer to these questions is no!

You can click on "LDS Leaders" to start reading at the beginning of this topic or use the Topic Index to jump to the part that interest you most.

L.D.S Leaders (pg. 437)

Overview of content in this section is as follows:

Was Joseph Smith an honest man? (pg. 437)

What about Gordon B. Hinckley? (pg. 439)

Challenge and arrogance of L.D.S authorities (pg. 441)

Brigham Young taught that Adam was God (pg. 442)

Joseph Smith was not a martyr (pg. 444)

Should we trust L.D.S Leaders?

WAS JOSEPH SMITH AN HONEST MAN?

Joseph Smith was the founder of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints. I have already offered evidence showing that he was a false prophet. Let's next ask the question, "Was Smith himself deluded, or was he simply dishonest?"

If a heavenly messenger visited me and had conversations with me, I am quite sure it is something I would not forget. Yet, there seems to be a lot of confusion surrounding the events of Joseph's first visions, or encounters. Either Joseph Smith could not clearly recall the facts surrounding these events, or other L.D.S. authorities altered the stories that are now the foundation of the church. Let's consider some of these visions.

First vision, version #1

BYU Studies Volume 9, 1968-1969, Number 3- Spring 1969,**E17 (PDF pg. 279-281)**

"The Early Accounts of Joseph Smith's First Vision", pgs.279-281
In this account Joseph was sixteen years old, and he was not praying to find out which church was true; he already knew they were all wrong. He was seeking forgiveness of sin and Jesus alone appeared to him and granted him forgiveness.

First vision, version #2

BYU Studies Volume 9, Number 3, pg. 283-284 **E17 (PDF pg. 283-284)**

In this account Joseph was fourteen, and his tongue seemed swollen so that he could not pray. Two beings appeared to him in this account; the entities are unidentified. Smith also saw many angels in this account.

First vision, version #3

The Pearl of Great Price, Joseph Smith History**E (PDF LDS Scripture pg. 918-920)**

Chapter1:7-20.
In this account Joseph was fifteen, and he was seeking to know which church was true. Two beings appeared to him and one of them said "this is my beloved Son, hear Him"; it is presumed that these entities were God the Father and Jesus. Smith was told to join none of the churches. There is no mention of forgiveness of sins, or angels.

Gold plates message, version #1

Early L.D.S. periodical, ***Messenger and Advocate***(Feb 1835), by Oliver Cowdery **E20 (PDF pg. 77-89)**

"Letter IV", pg.77
In this account Joseph was seventeen years old and the angel Moroni appeared to him and forgave him of his sins. Moroni then proceeded to inform Smith of the "Plates", which Smith was to later translate into the ***Book of Mormon***.

Gold plates message, version #2

Early L.D.S. periodical, ***Times and Seasons Vol. 3***, pgs. 748-753 **E24 (PDF pg.268-276)**

In this account Joseph was between fourteen and fifteen years old when the angel Nephi appeared to him, informing him of the "Plates". There is no mention of forgiveness of sins. Some Mormons would have us believe that these accounts are various views of the same events. Perhaps, after receiving such a visitation, one might forget his exact age at the time of the visitation — but certainly he would remember the name of an angel who appeared with news about gold plates. And surely he would remember whether Jesus alone appeared in the vision, or whether it was "God the Father" as well as Jesus, and whether or not there was a multitude of accompanying angels. Another discrepancy: in one version, Smith is praying for discernment regarding determination of the true church; in another version, Smith already knew that no church was true, so he was not praying for such discernment. Rather, he was praying for forgiveness of sins. Why do the same stories have different versions? We must consider the obvious explanation: there was no first vision at all, and Joseph Smith (or some other early church leader), concocted the whole story. The contrasts in the stories hold stronger to the idea that the stories are a lie, than they do to the idea that there are simply different versions of the same events.

Other interesting quotes concerning this subject.

Journal of Discourses, Vol.2, by Brigham Young. February 18, 1855, pg.171 **(PDF pg. 179)**

> "But as it was in the days of our Savior, so was it in the advent of this new dispensation. It was not in accordance with the notions, traditions, and pre-conceived ideas of the American people. The messenger did not come to an eminent divine of any of the so-called orthodoxy; he did not adopt their interpretation of the Holy Scriptures. **The Lord did not come** with the armies of heaven, in power and great glory, nor send His messengers panoplied with aught else than the truth of heaven, to communicate to the meek, the lowly, the youth of humble origin, the sincere enquirer after the knowledge of God. **But He did send His angel** to this same obscure person, **Joseph Smith Jun.,** who afterwards became a Prophet, Seer, and Revelator, and **informed him that he should not join any of the religious sects of the day, for they were all wrong**; that they were following the precepts of men instead of the Lord Jesus; that He had a work for him to perform, inasmuch as he should prove faithful before Him." **E9**

Journal of Discourses, Vol.20, by John Taylor. March 2nd, 1879, pgs. 166-168 **(PDF pg.175)**
(John Taylor was the third president of the church)

> "I had a visit from some of your folks during the session of the Legislature. How was it, and which was right? None of them was right, just as it was when **the Prophet Joseph asked the** *angel* **which of the sects was right that he might join it**. The answer was that none of them are right. What, none of them? No. We will not stop to argue that question; the angel merely told him to join none of them that none of them were right." **E9**

Journal of Discourses, Vol.12, by George Albert Smith. November 15, 1868, pg.334, **(PDF pg. 342)**
(George Albert Smith was sustained first counselor in the first presidency in 1868)

> "Joseph Smith had attended these meetings, and when this result was reached he saw clearly that something was wrong. He had read the Bible and had found that passage in James which says 'If any of you lack wisdom let him ask of God that giveth to all men liberally and upbraideth not,' and taking this literally, he went humbly before the Lord and inquired of Him, and the Lord answered his prayer and revealed to Joseph, by the ministration of angels, the true condition of the religious world. **When the holy angel appeared, Joseph inquired which of all these denominations was right and which he should join, and was told they were all wrong,--** they had all gone astray, transgressed the laws, changed the ordinances and broken the everlasting covenant, and that the Lord was about to restore the priesthood and establish His Church, which would be the only true and living Church on the face of the whole earth." **E9**

Why do they not teach it was an angel that appeared to Joseph now?

Topic Index

What about a more current prophet like Gordon B. Hinckley?

Since Joseph Smith is the founder of the Mormon Church and he was a false prophet and a dishonest man, it is not reasonable to expect the church to be true today.

It is well known that the Mormon Church teaches that God was once a man and that we may become a God. I went to the library and obtained two articles in which Gordon B. Hinckley (1910-2008; fifteenth President of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints) was interviewed. These are (A) the ***San Francisco Chronicle***, Sunday, April 13, 1997. This is a seven-page article beginning on page 3/Z1; and (B) ***Time Magazine***, 8-4-1997, pgs. 51-57. In the ***San Francisco Chronicle*** Don Lattin asked Gordon B Hinckley, ***"There are some significant differences in your beliefs. For instance, don't Mormons believe that God was once a man?"*** Hinckley's answer was,***" I wouldn't say that. There is a little couplet coined, 'As man is, God once was. As God is, man may become.' Now that's more than a couplet than anything else. That gets into some pretty deep theology that we don't know very much about." B4***

The reporters for ***Time Magazine*** were S.C. Gwynne and Richard N. Ostling. Their article included the following about Hinckley.***"On whether his church still holds that God the Father was once a man, he sounded uncertain. 'I don't know that we teach it. I don't know that we emphasize it...I understand the philosophical background behind it, but I don't know a lot about it, and I don't think others know a lot about it.'"***[B5]

I find it quite interesting that Hinckley said, ***"I don't know that we teach it"***, as well as, ***"That gets into some pretty deep theology that we don't know very much about."***and,***"I don't know a lot about it, and I don't think others know a lot about it."***Joseph Smith, James Talmage, and Bruce McConkie seem to have known.

Articles of Faith by James Talmage. Ch.24, pgs.430-431 **(PDF pg. 457-458)**

> "We believe in a God who is Himself progressive, whose majesty is intelligence; whose perfection consists in eternal advancement — a Being who has attained His exalted state by a path which now His children are permitted to follow, whose glory it is their heritage to share. In spite of the opposition of the sects, in the face of direct charges of blasphemy, the Church proclaims the eternal truth: "As man is, God once was; as God is, man may be." With such a future, well may man open his heart to the stream of revelation, past, present, and to come; and truthfully should we be able to say of every enlightened child of God, that he 'beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things.'" [E27]

Mormon Doctrine by Bruce R. McConkie. Pg.321 **(PDF pg. 117)**

> "GODHOOD
>
> "Joseph Smith said: 'God himself was once as we are now, and is an exalted man, and sits enthroned in yonder heavens! I am going to tell you how God came to be God. We have imagined and supposed that God was God from all eternity. I will refute that idea, and take away the veil, so that you may see. It is the first principle of the gospel to know for a certainty the character of God, and to know that we may converse with him as one man converses with another, and that **he was once a man like us**; yea, that God himself the Father of us all, dwelt on an earth, the same as Jesus Christ himself did; and I will show it from the Bible. "Here, then, is eternal life — to know the only wise and true God and you have got to learn how to be gods yourselves, and to be kings and priests to God, the same as all gods have done before you, namely, by going from one small degree to another, and from a small capacity to a great one; from grace to grace, from exaltation to exaltation, until you attain to the resurrection of the dead, and are able to dwell in everlasting burnings, and to sit in glory, as do those who sit enthroned in everlasting power. [Such persons are] heirs of God and joint-heirs with Jesus Christ. What is it? To inherit the same power, the same glory and the same exaltation, until you arrive at the station of a god, and ascend the throne of eternal power, the same as those who have gone before (*Teachings*, pp. 345-347)." Again: "Every man who reigns in celestial glory is a god to his dominions (*Teachings*, p. 374)." [E6]

Should we conclude that a current president of the Mormon Church does not know Mormon doctrine? I find this very unlikely. We are then left with two options: (1) the doctrine of God is currently being changed by the Mormon Church; or (2) Gordon B. Hinckley lied. I came to the conclusion that he lied. Although I cannot speak of Hinckley's motivation to lie, one truth to consider is that this teaching (man becoming as God) could hinder missionaries who are striving to gain converts into the Mormon faith. Mormon missionaries certainly do not come to your door and say, "God was once a man, and you can become a God."Nor do they say, "Jesus and Lucifer are brothers" I believe if L.D.S missionaries were up front about these L.D.S. teachings, fewer people would become Mormons.

Reference Notation: Teachings of Lorenzo Snow p. 2
"As man now is, God once was. As God now is, man may be." **E31**

Jesus and Lucifer are brothers -Journal of Discourses, Vol.6, p.207 - p.208, **E9 (PDF pg. 215)**

Topic Index

THE CHALLENGE BY L.D.S. AUTHORITIES!

Brigham Young:

> "Take up the Bible, compare the religion of the Latter-Day Saints with it and see if it will stand the test." **E9** (***Journal of Discourses Vol. 16*** pg. 46, 1873) **(PDF pg. 54)**

Brigham Young:

> "No man can disprove a truth….Why not rather every man rise up and say, Let God be true, let the truth remain and let me know the truth. That is what I want — I will submit to it; and let every false theory and principal fall, to rise up no more." **E9** (***Journal of Discourses Vol. 8*** pg. 132, 1860) **(PDF pg.140)**

Orson Pratt:

> "If we cannot convince you by reason nor by the word of God, that your religion is wrong, we will not persecute you...we ask you the same generosity...convince us of our errors of doctrine, if we have any, by reason, by logical arguments, or by the word of God and we will be forever grateful for the information."**E12** (***The Seer***, pg.15) **(PDF pg.15)**

THE AUTHORITY OF L.D.S. LEADERS? OR THE ARROGANCE?

The Discourses of Wilford Woodruff, pgs. 212-213

> "…the Lord will never permit me or any other man who stands as president of this Church to lead you astray. It is not in the program." **E32**

Journal of Discourses, Vol.6, pg.32, Heber C. Kimball, November 8, 1857

> "…learn to do as you are told..... if you are told by your leader to do a thing, do it. None of your business whether it is right or wrong."**E9 (PDF pg.40)**

Louis Midgley, ***Review of Books on the Book of Mormon,*** pg.11

> "'The membership of the Mormon church,' Smith writes, 'is taught not to "question the mysteries": When the Prophet speaks, the thinking has been done."**E32**

History of the Church Vol.6, Ch.19, pg.408 (Joseph Smith is speaking) **(PDF pg. 2432)**

> "In all these affidavits, indictments, it is all of the devil — all corruption. Come on! ye prosecutors! ye false swearers! All hell, boil over! Ye burning mountains, roll down your lava! for I will come out on the top at last. I have more to boast of than ever any man had. I am the only man that has ever been able to keep a whole church together since the days of Adam. A large majority of the whole have stood by me. Neither Paul, John, Peter, nor Jesus ever did it. I boast that no man ever did such a work as I. The followers of Jesus ran away from Him; but the Latter-day Saints never ran away from me yet." **E7**

If Joseph Smith was not a follower of Jesus Christ, then whom was he following?

Topic Index

BRIGHAM YOUNG TAUGHT THAT ADAM WAS GOD (Mormon Prophet)

Journal of Discourses Vol.1, pgs.50-51(Brigham Young, April 9, 1852) **(PDF pg.58)**

> "Now hear it, O inhabitants of the earth, Jew and Gentile, Saint and sinner! When our father Adam came into the garden of Eden, he came into it with a celestial body, and brought Eve, one of his wives, with him. He helped to make and organize this world. He is MICHAEL, the Archangel, the ANCIENT OF DAYS! about whom holy men have written and spoken--HE is our FATHER and our GOD, and the only God with whom WE have to do. Every man upon the earth, professing Christians or non-professing, must hear it, and will know it sooner or later." **E9**

Journal of Discourses, Vol.5, pgs.331-332 (Brigham Young, October 7, 1857 **(PDF pg.339-340)**

"Their belief reminds me that brother Joseph B. Nobles once told a Methodist priest, after hearing him describe his god, that the god they worshipped was the 'Mormons' devil—a being without a body, whereas our God has a body, parts, and passions. The Devil was cursed and sent down from heaven. He has no body of his own; therefore he is constantly endeavoring to obtain possession of the tabernacles belonging to others. Some have grumbled because I believe our God to be so near to us as Father Adam. There are many who know that doctrine to be true. Where was Michael in the creation of this earth? Did he have a mission to the earth? He did. Where was he? In the Grand Council, and performed the mission assigned him there. Now, if it should happen that we have to pay tribute to Father Adam, what a humiliating circumstance it would be! Just wait till you pass Joseph Smith; and after Joseph lets you pass him, you will find Peter; and after you pass the Apostles and many of the Prophets, you will find Abraham, and he will say, 'I have the keys, and except you do thus and so, you cannot pass;' and after a while you come to Jesus; and when you at length meet Father Adam, how strange it will appear to your present notions. If we can pass Joseph and have him say, 'Here; you have been faithful, good boys; I hold the keys of this dispensation; I will let you pass;' then we shall be very glad to see the white locks of Father Adam. But those are ideas which do not concern us at present, although it is written in the Bible— 'This is eternal life, to know thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent.'" **E9**

BRIGHAM YOUNG'S WORDS ARE AS GOOD AS SCRIPTURE:

Journal of Discourses, Vol.13, pg.95 (Brigham Young, January 2, 1870) **(PDF pg. 103)**

"The Lord is in our midst. He teaches the people continually. I have never yet preached a sermon and sent it out to the children of men, that they may not call Scripture. Let me have the privilege of correcting a sermon, and it is as good Scripture as they deserve." **E9**

JOSEPH SMITH WAS NOT A MARTYR.

Smith died in a gunfight shooting at those who were trying to kill him. I am not implying that it is wrong to defend yourself when a mob comes to kill you; my argument is simply that Smith did not die as a martyr.

D&C 135:4 **(PDF LDS Scripture pg. 847)**

> "When Joseph went to Carthage to deliver himself up to the pretended requirements of the law, two or three days previous to his assassination, he said: 'I am going like a lamb to the slaughter; but I am calm as a summer's morning; I have a conscience void of offense towards God, and towards all men. I SHALL DIE INNOCENT, AND IT SHALL YET BE SAID OF ME — HE WAS MURDERED IN COLD BLOOD.' — The same morning, after Hyrum had made ready to go — shall it be said to the slaughter? yes, for so it was — he read the following paragraph, near the close of the twelfth chapter of Ether, in the Book of Mormon, and turned down the leaf upon it…"

Read the account. Ask yourself if it describes a "lamb led to slaughter", or a martyr?

History of the Church, Vol.6, Ch.34, pg.617 **(PDF pg. 2580)**

"It is said that the guard elevated their firelocks, and boisterously threatening the mob discharged their firearms over their heads. The mob encircled the building, and some of them rushed by the guard up the flight of stairs, burst open the door, and began the work of death, while others fired in through the open windows.

"In the meantime Joseph, Hyrum, and Elder Taylor had their coats off. Joseph sprang to his coat for his six-shooter, Hyrum for his single barrel, Taylor for Markham's large hickory cane, and Dr. Richards for Taylor's cane. All sprang against the door, the balls whistled up the stairway, and in an instant one came through the door.
"Joseph Smith, John Taylor and Dr. Richards sprang to the left of the door, and tried to knock aside the guns of the ruffians.

"Hyrum was retreating back in front of the door and snapped his pistol, when a ball struck him in the left side of his nose, and he fell on his back on the floor saying, 'I am a dead man!' As he fell on the floor another ball from the outside entered his left side, and passed through his body with such force that it completely broke to pieces the watch he wore in his vest pocket, and at the same instant another ball from the door grazed his breast, and entered his head by the throat; subsequently a fourth ball entered his left leg. A shower of balls was pouring through all parts of the room, many of which lodged in the ceiling just above the head of Hyrum.

"Joseph reached round the door casing, and discharged his six shooter into the passage, some barrels missing fire. Continual discharges of musketry came into the room. Elder Taylor continued parrying the guns until they had got them about half their length into the room, when he found that resistance was vain, and he attempted to jump out of the window, where a ball fired from within struck him on his left thigh, hitting the gone, and passing through to within half an inch of the other side. He fell on the window sill, when a ball fired from the outside struck his watch in his vest pocket, and threw him back into the room.

"After he fell into the room he was hit by two more balls, one of them injuring his left wrist considerably, and the other entering at the side of the bone just below the left knee. He rolled under the bed, which was at the right side of the window in the south-east corner of the room.

"While he lay under the bed he was fired at several times from the stairway; one ball struck him on the left hip, which tore the flesh in a shocking manner, and large quantities of blood were scattered upon the wall and floor.

"When Hyrum fell, Joseph exclaimed, 'Oh dear, brother Hyrum!' and opening the door a few inches he discharged his six shooter in the stairway (as stated before), two or three barrels of which missed fire.

"Joseph, seeing there was no safety in the room, and no doubt thinking that it would save the lives of his brethren in the room if he could get out, turned calmly from the door, dropped his pistol on the floor and sprang into the window when two balls pierced him from the door, and one entered his right breast from without, and he fell outward into the hands of his murderers, exclaiming, 'O Lord, my God!'" **E7**

Topic Index

There are some topics from Mormon beginnings rarely discussed, but still worth considering since this is what Joseph Smith claimed was the true church that was restored through him. You can pick from the Topic Index below or just click on **Miscellaneous** and read all of them from the beginning.

Miscellaneous (pg. 447)

Jesus Married? (pg. 447)

Jesus crucified because of polygamy? (pg. 447)

If a white man has relations with a Negro God will kill him. (pg. 448)

A council of Gods made up the plan of creation or God created by Himself? (pg. 449)

Mormons are not to eat meat except in cold or famine (pg. 449)

The Bible says Adam sinned; a Mormon prophet disagrees with the Bible (pg. 450)

Blood Atonement (pg. 451)

L.D.S claims that it was Jesus who got married, when he turned the water into wine.

Journal of Discourses Vol.2, pg.82, Orson Hyde, 10/6 1854 **(PDF pg.90)**

> "Gentlemen, that is as plain as the translators, or different councils over this Scripture, dare allow it to go to the world, but the thing is there; it is told; Jesus was the bridegroom at the marriage of Cana of Galilee, and he told them what to do. Now there was actually a marriage; and if Jesus was not the bridegroom on that occasion, please tell who was. If any man can show this, and prove that it was not the Savior of the world, then I will acknowledge I am in error. We say it was Jesus Christ who was married, to be brought into the relation whereby he could see his seed, before he was crucified." **E9**

B. H. Roberts, ***Defense of the Faith and the Saints Vol.2,*** pg.309 **(PDF pg.309)**

> "Jesus himself was married, and was probably a polygamist." **E34**

According to the Bible, Jesus *was invited* to the wedding.

John 2:1-2

> "And on the third day there was a wedding in Cana of Galilee, and the mother of Jesus was there; and Jesus also was invited, and His disciples, to the wedding."

Why would someone be invited to his own wedding? There is nothing in the text that even slightly indicates Jesus was married.

Topic Index

JESUS CRUCIFIED BECAUSE OF POLYGAMY?

Journal of Discourses, Vol.1, pg.346 (Jedediah M. Grant, August 7, 1853) **(PDF pg.354)**

> "The grand reason of the burst of public sentiment in anathemas upon Christ and his disciples, causing his crucifixion, was evidently based upon polygamy, according to the testimony of the philosophers who rose in that age. A belief in the doctrine of a plurality of wives caused the persecution of Jesus and his followers. We might almost think they were 'Mormons.'" **E9**

Grant is quoting a philosopher, not Mormon doctrine. However, his response to the quote is amazing. The first time I read this claim of philosophers, it made me angry; on the other hand, Grant is not bothered at all. Also interesting is that Grant admits that Jesus and His disciples were not Mormons.

RACISM REARS ITS UGLY HEAD…

Journal of Discourses, Vol.10, pg.109 (Brigham Young, March 8, 1863) **(PDF pg.118)**

> "Shall I tell you the law of God in regard to the African race? If the white man who belongs to the chosen seed mixes his blood with the seed of Cain, the penalty, under the law of God, is death on the spot. **This will always be so.** The nations of the earth have transgressed every law that God has given, they have changed the ordinances and broken every covenant made with the fathers, and they are like a hungry man that dreameth that he eateth, and he awaketh and behold he is empty." **E9**

Who determined that "white man" is a "chosen seed"? What nationality is that? The New Testament does not agree with this racial attitude.

Romans 1:16

> "For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek."

Romans 10:12

> "For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek; for the same Lord is Lord of all, abounding in riches for all who call upon Him…"

Galatians 3:28

> "There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free man, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus."

Colossians 3:10-11

> "…and have put on the new self who is being renewed to a true knowledge according to the image of the One who created him a renewal in which there is no distinction between Greek and Jew, circumcised and uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave and freeman, but Christ is all, and in all."

A COUNCIL OF GODS MADE UP THE PLAN OF CREATION.

Scriptural Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith, Section Six 1843–44, pg.**349 (PDF pg. 349-350)**

> "In the beginning, the head of the Gods called a council of the Gods; and they came together and concocted a plan to create the world and people it. When we begin to learn this way, we begin to learn the only true God, and what kind of a being we have got to worship. Having a knowledge of God, we begin to know how to approach him, and how to ask so as to receive an answer. When we understand the character of God, and how to come to him, he begins to unfold the heavens to us, and to tell us all about it. When we are ready to come to him, he is ready to come to us." **E35**

God says he created all by Himself, with no help.

Isaiah 44:24

> "Thus says the LORD, your Redeemer, and the one who formed you from the womb, 'I, the LORD, am the maker of all things, stretching out the heavens by myself, and spreading out the earth all alone…'"

Topic Index

MORMONS ARE TOLD NOT TO EAT MEAT EXCEPT IN COLD OR FAMINE (NOT SUMMER).

D&C 89:12-13 **(PDF LDS Scripture pg. 342)**

> "Yea, flesh also of beasts and of the fowls of the air, I, the Lord, have ordained for the use of man with thanksgiving; nevertheless they are to be used sparingly; And it is pleasing unto me that they should not be used, only in times of winter, or of cold, or famine."**E**

THE BIBLE SAYS ADAM SINNED; A MORMON PROPHET DISAGREES WITH THE BIBLE.

Doctrines of Salvation, Vol.1, pg.114 (Joseph Fielding Smith, Jr.) **(PDF pg. 71)**

"It is true, the Lord warned Adam and Eve that to partake of the fruit they would transgress a law, and this happened. But it is not always a sin to transgress a law. I will try to illustrate this. The chemist in his laboratory takes different elements and combines them, and the result is that something very different results. He has changed the law. As an example in point: hydrogen, two parts, and oxygen, one part, passing through an electric spark will combine and form water. Hydrogen will burn, so will oxygen, but water will put out a fire. This may be subject to some disagreement by the critics who will say it is not transgressing a law. Well, Adam's transgression was of a similar nature, that is, his transgression was in accordance with law.

"The transgression of Adam did not involve sex sin as some falsely believe and teach. Adam and Eve were married by the Lord while they were yet immortal beings in the Garden of Eden and before death entered the world.

"ADAM AND EVE REJOICED IN FALL. Before partaking of the fruit Adam could have lived forever; therefore, his status was one of immortality. When he ate, he became subject to death, and therefore he became mortal. This was a transgression of the law, but not a sin in the strict sense, for it was something that Adam and Eve had to do!

"I am sure that neither Adam nor Eve looked upon it as a sin, when they learned the consequences, and this is discovered in their words after they learned the consequences.

"Adam said: 'Blessed be the name of God, for because of my transgression my eyes are opened, and in this life I shall have joy, and again in the flesh I shall see God.'

"Eve said: 'Were it riot for our transgression we never should have had seed, and never should have known good and evil, and the joy of our redemption, and the eternal life which God giveth unto all the obedient.'

"We can hardly look upon anything resulting in such benefits as being a sin, in the sense in which we consider sin." **E2** (End Quote)

The Bible never tells us that Adam and Eve rejoiced in the fall. Adam and Eve never said what this former Mormon prophet quotes them as saying. The Bible says eating the forbidden fruit was a sin. Furthermore, God punished them for it. (Genesis Chapter 3).

Romans 5:12-15

> "Therefore, just as through one man sin entered into the world, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men, because all sinned — for until the Law sin was in the world; but sin is not imputed when there is no law. Nevertheless death reigned from Adam until Moses, even over those who had not sinned in the likeness of the offense of Adam, who is a type of Him who was to come. But the free gift is not like the transgression. For if by the transgression of the one the many died, much more did the grace of God and the gift by the grace of the one Man, Jesus Christ, abound to the many."

Topic Index

BLOOD ATONEMENT

The Mormon Church used to teach for some sins your own blood must be spilled

Journal of Discourses Vol.3, pg.247, (Brigham Young, March 16, 1856) **(PDF pg. 255)**

"You say, 'That man ought to die for transgressing the law of God. 'Let me suppose a case. Suppose you found your brother in bed with your wife, and put a javelin through both of them, you would be justified, and they would atone for their sins, and be received into the kingdom of God. I would at once do so in such a case; and under such circumstances, I have no wife whom I love so well that I would not put a javelin through her heart, and I would do it with clean hands. But you who trifle with your covenants, be careful lest in judging you will be judged.

"Every man and women has got to have clean hands and pure heart, to execute judgment, else they had better let the matter alone.

"Again, suppose the parties are not caught in their iniquity, and it passes along unnoticed, shall I have compassion on them? Yes, I will have compassion on them, for transgressions of the nature already named, or for those of any other description. If the Lord so order it that they are not caught in the act of their iniquity, it is pretty good proof that He is willing for them to live; and I say let them live and suffer in the flesh for their sins, for they will have it to do.

"There is not a man or woman, who violates the covenants made with their God, that will not be required to pay the debt. **The blood of Christ will never wipe that out, your own blood must atone for it;** and the judgments of the Almighty will come, sooner or later, and every man and woman will have to atone for breaking their covenants. To what degree? Will they have to go to hell? They are in hell enough now. I do not wish them in a greater hell, when their consciences condemn them all the time. Let compassion reign in our bosoms. Try to comprehend how weak we are, how we are organized, how the spirit and the flesh are continually at war."[E9]

Journal of Discourses Vol.4, pg.53 (Brigham Young, September 21, 1856) **(PDF pg. 61)**

> "There are sins that men commit for which they cannot receive forgiveness in this world, or in that which is to come, and if they had their eyes open to see their true condition, they would be perfectly willing to have their blood spilt upon the ground, that the smoke thereof might ascend to heaven as an offering for their sins; and the smoking incense would atone for their sins, whereas, if such is not the case, they will stick to them and remain upon them in the spirit world. I know, when you hear my brethren telling about cutting people off from the earth, that you consider it is strong doctrine; but it is to save them, not to destroy them." **E9**

Journal of Discourses Vol.4, pg.219 (Brigham Young, February 8, 1857) **(PDF pg.227)**

> "Now take a person in this congregation who has knowledge with regard to being saved in the kingdom of our God and our Father, and being exalted, one who knows and understands the principles of eternal life, and sees the beauty and excellency of the eternities before him compared with the vain and foolish things of the world, and suppose that he is overtaken in a gross fault, that he has committed a sin that he knows will deprive him of that exaltation which he desires, and that he cannot attain to it without the shedding of his blood, and also knows that by having his blood shed he will atone for that sin, and be saved and exalted with the Gods, is there a man of woman in this house but what would say, 'shed my blood that I may be saved and exalted with the Gods?'" **E9**

Blood atonement was indeed practiced by the early Mormon Church. Other forms of punishment, such as whipping and castration, were also practiced.

(Documentation for this can be found in ***Mormonism Shadow or Reality?*** by Sandra and Jerald Tanner, in Chapters 25 and 36.)

But according to 1 John 1:7, we do not need to spill our own blood to atone for sins. "…but if we walk in the light as He Himself is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus His Son cleanses us from **ALL** sin."

Topic Index

Table of Contents pg 1, 2, 3, 4 Jehovah Witness Index pg. 1, 2

Jehovah Witness Introduction

JEHOVAH WITNESSES

Many people have at least met a Jehovah Witnesses because the Jehovah Witness knocked on their door. The Churches that these people go to are called Kingdom Hall. The Watchtower Bible and Tract Society print the literature that the Jehovah Witnesses read and distribute. Charles Taze Russell established the church in 1879. Russell died in 1916 and was replaced by the 2nd president, Joseph F Rutherford. In the early stages the church was also known as the "International Bible Students Association. The Jehovah Witnesses that I have met are very sincere and good honest people. Unfortunately a person can be very sincere and still be wrong. Our question should be: "Is the Watchtower Bible and Tract Society a prophet of God? Does the Watchtower Society print the truth about God, Jesus, the Holy Spirit and salvation?

Sadly they do not teach the truth and they have proven to be false prophets. However this does not mean that you should chase their people away from your door or be disrespectful to them. They are people whom the Lord loves and he wants them to hear the truth. We need to remember that the Jehovah Witness is not our enemy. They are instead the one who is deceived by our enemy.

Eph 6:12 For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places. (NAS)

1 Pet 3:15 but sanctify Christ as Lord in your hearts, always being ready to make a defense to everyone who asks you to give

The Jehovah Witness Index starts on the next page.

Jehovah Witness Index pg. 1, 2

Jehovah Witness Index Page
These Index pages give you a good overview of the entire content on the subject of Jehovah Witnesses. At anytime you can click on **Jehovah Witness pg 1, 2** to come back to part of the index that you want here.

Jehovah Witnesses Index

Is the Watchtower a prophet of God? (pg. 456)
The Watchtower is a self proclaimed prophet of God (pg. 456)
How do you tell a true prophet from a false prophet? (pg. 458)

Does the Watchtower measure up to this test? (pg. 460)
False prophecy in the New York Times (pg. 461)

A Different God (pg. 467)
Quotes from the Watchtower (pg. 467)

The Trinity is taught in the Bible (pg. 470)

The Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit are all called God (pg. 471)

The Holy Spirit speaking in New Testament is God speaking in Old Testament (pg. 471)

Father, Son & Holy Spirit are all separate (pg. 472)

There is only one God (pg. 473)

The Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit are called the creator yet there is only one creator. (473)

More plurality in the singular God (pg. 475)
The whole Trinity in one passage in the Old Testament (pg. 475)

Unity in the New Testament (pg. 475)
Trinity hard to understand does not make it untrue (pg. 476)
Comparing what they have in common (pg. 476)

A different Jesus (pg. 479)
Watchtower view
Jesus is a created being (pg. 479)
Jesus is a god, but not the Almighty God (pg. 480)
Jesus is Michael the Archangel (pg. 481)
Jesus should not be worshipped (pg. 481)
Jesus did not bodily rise from the dead (pg. 482)

Jehovah Witness Index Page

A different Jesus continued:
Christian view
Jesus is not a created being he is the creator (pg. 483)
Jesus is not just "a" god, he is God (pg. 484)
Jesus is not Michael the Archangel (pg. 488)
Jesus is worshiped in the Bible (pg. 488)
The importance of the bodily resurrection of Jesus (pg. 489)

A different Holy Spirit (pg. 491)
Watchtower view
The Holy Spirit is not a person (pg. 491)
The Holy Spirit is not equal to Jehovah (pg. 492)
The Holy Spirit came in the form of a dove not a person (pg. 492)
The Holy Spirit is the power that was given to Jesus (pg. 492)
A person cannot be filled with another person (pg. 492)
Stephen only saw two people not three (pg. 492)

Christian view
The Holy Spirit is a person. (pg. 493)
The Holy Spirit is called God and has his attributes. (pg. 494)
The Holy Spirit is not just a power. (pg. 496)
The Holy Spirit can fill a person and still be a person. (pg. 496)
Stephen only saw two people not three. (pg. 496)

A Different Gospel (pg. 497)
Watchtower tells of four basic requirements. (pg. 497)
Christian rebuttal to the Watchtower's 4 requirements (pg. 498)

Is it wrong to study or think for yourself? (pg. 500)

Watchtower literature, is it trustworthy? (pg. 502)
Should you believe in the Trinity? (Pamphlet) (pg. 502)
Christian Response to the Watchtower pamphlet (pg. 503)
The Trinity was taught before the 4th century (pg. 503)
The Ante-Nicene Fathers mentioned did not teach or believe what the Watchtower stated. (p.504)

The New Worlds Translation of the Bible (pg. 508)
No known Greek or Hebrew scholars involved with the New World Translation (pg. 508)
Same Greek word translated differently out of bias of doctrine (pg. 509)
Words added to text not in the Greek (pg. 511)

IS THE WATCH TOWER A PROPHET OF GOD?

To accurately answer the question, "Is the Watch Tower a Prophet of God?" the following questions must also be answered.

Has the Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society (which writes the literature for the Jehovah's Witnesses) claimed to be a prophet of God?
How does the Bible say to distinguish a false prophet from a true prophet?
Does the Watch Tower measure up to this test?

Throughout this study, all quoted references followed by (JW) or (NWT) is material printed by Watch Tower. [(JW) = Jehovah's Witnesses; (NWT) = New World Translation of the Holy Scriptures.]

Has the Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society (which writes the literature for the Jehovah's Witnesses) claimed to be a prophet of God?

JW index pg. 1, 2

The Watch Tower is a self-proclaimed prophet of God. Following is a Watch Tower quote.

The *Watch Tower*, April 1, **1972**, p.197 **(JW)** **(PDF pg. 197)**

> "**'They Shall Know that a Prophet Was Among Them'**
>
> "JEHOVAH GOD is interested in having people know him. Though he is invisible to human eyes, he provides various ways by which they can know his personality. They can know what to expect from him and what he expects of them.
>
> "One can come to understand that Jehovah is a God of surpassing wisdom by observing creation. This also reveals the loving care with which he designed things for man's welfare and enjoyment. A second way to know God is through his Word of truth, the Bible. Herein one finds the full expression of Jehovah's purpose toward mankind — why man is on the earth and the blessings that God has in store.
>
> "**A third way of coming to know Jehovah God is through his representatives**. In ancient times he sent prophets as his special messengers. While these men foretold things to come, they also served the people by telling them of God's will for them at that time, often also warning them of dangers and calamities. People today can view the creative works. They have at hand the Bible, but it is little read or understood. **So, does Jehovah have a prophet to help them, to warn them of dangers and to declare things to come?**

"**IDENTIFYING THE 'PROPHET'**

"**These questions can be answered in the affirmative. Who is this prophet?** The clergy of the so-called 'Christian' nations hold themselves before the people as being the ones commissioned to speak for God. But, as pointed out in the previous issue of this magazine, they have failed God and failed as proclaimers of his kingdom by approving a man-made political organization, the League of Nations (now the United Nations), as 'the political expression of the Kingdom of God on earth.'

However, Jehovah did not let the people of Christendom, as led by the clergy, go without being warned that the League was a counterfeit substitute for the real kingdom of God. He had a 'prophet' to warn them. **This 'prophet' was not one man, but was a body of men and women. It was the small group of footstep followers of Jesus Christ, known at that time as International Bible Students. Today they are known as Jehovah's Christian witnesses.** They are still proclaiming a warning, and have been joined and assisted in their commissioned work by hundreds of thousands of persons who have listened to their message with belief." (End Quote)

The Watch Tower claims to be the only channel of God's truth. Following is another Watch Tower quote.

The *Watch Tower*, Feb. 15, **1981**, p. 19 **(JW)** **(PDF pg. 119)**

"OUR VIEW OF THE 'SLAVE'

"We can benefit from this consideration. If we have once established what instrument God is using as his 'slave' to dispense spiritual food to his people, surely Jehovah is not pleased if we receive that food as though it might contain something harmful. We should have confidence in the channel God is using. **At the Brooklyn headquarters from which the Bible publications of Jehovah's Witnesses emanate there are more mature Christian elders, both of the 'remnant' and of the 'other sheep,' than anywhere else upon earth.**

"True, the brothers preparing these publications are not infallible. Their writings are not inspired as are those of Paul and the other Bible writers. (2 Tim. 3:16) And so, at times, it has been necessary, as understanding became clearer, to correct views. (Prov. 4:18) However, this has resulted in a continual refining of the body of Bible-based truth to which Jehovah's Witnesses subscribe. Over the years, as adjustments have been made to that body of truth, it has become ever more wonderful and applicable to our lives in these 'last days.' Bible commentators of Christendom are not inspired either. Despite their claims to great knowledge, they have failed to highlight even basic Bible truths-

such as the coming Paradise earth, the importance of God's name, and the condition of the dead.

"Rather, the record that the 'faithful and discreet slave' organization has made for the past more than 100 years forces us to the conclusion that Peter expressed when Jesus asked if his apostles also wanted to leave him, namely, 'Whom shall we go away to?' (John 6:66-69) No question about it. **We all need help to understand the Bible, and we cannot find the Scriptural guidance we need outside the 'faithful and discreet slave' organization.**" (End Quote)

JW index pg. 1, 2

How does the Bible say to distinguish a false prophet from a true prophet?

When we look to the Bible we can soon learn how to distinguish a false prophet from a true prophet. We are also told why it is important to do so.

Matthew 7:21-23: "Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven; but he who does the will of My Father who is in heaven. **Many will say to Me on that day, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in Your name, and in Your name cast out demons, and in Your name perform many miracles?' And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from Me…"**

Here we learn that there are those who prophesy in Jesus' name and even perform miracles, but that does not mean they are from God!

Acts 3:22-23: "Moses said, 'The Lord God shall raise up for you a prophet like me from your brethren; to Him you shall give heed in everything He says to you. And it shall be that every soul that does not heed that prophet shall be utterly destroyed from among the people.'"

In this passage we can see why it would be important to distinguish a false prophet from a true prophet. It certainly does not sound wise to ignore what someone has to say, if that person is truly a prophet of God.

Deuteronomy 18:18-22 (NAS): "18) I will raise up a prophet from among their countrymen like you, and I will put My words in his mouth, and he shall speak to them all that I command him. 19) And it shall come about that whoever will not listen to My words which he shall speak in My name, I Myself will require it of him. 20) But the prophet who shall speak a word presumptuously in My name which I have not commanded him to speak, or which he shall speak in the name of other gods, that prophet shall die.' 21) **And you may say in your heart, 'How shall we know the word which the LORD has not spoken?'**22)**When a prophet speaks in the name of the LORD, if the thing does not come about or come true, that is the thing which the LORD has not spoken. The prophet has spoken it presumptuously; you shall not be afraid of him."**

In verses 18-19, we see that we should listen to a true prophet or answer to God for it.

In verses 21-22, we see that it is easy to tell the difference between a true prophet and a false one. If a true prophet speaks, and he tells us something about the future, it will come to pass. Notice there is no mention of any exceptions — one false prophecy makes one a false prophet.

As we can see in verse 20, God does not take the matter of false prophets lightly.

One might ask how God can judge the false prophets so harshly. Think about it; a false prophet is claiming that God said something that God knows he did not say. God Himself is the One Who causes prophecy to come true. Man, when he is involved, is only an instrument God uses. Following is some Scripture that shows this.

Ezekiel 12:22-25: "Son of man, what is this proverb you people have concerning the land of Israel, saying, 'The days are long and every vision fails'? Therefore say to them, 'Thus says the Lord GOD, I will make this proverb cease so that they will no longer use it as a proverb in Israel.' But tell them, 'The days draw near as well as the fulfillment of every vision. For there will no longer be any false vision or flattering divination within the house of Israel. For I the LORD shall speak, and whatever word I speak will be performed. It will no longer be delayed, for in your days, O rebellious house, **I shall speak the word and perform it,' declares the Lord GOD."**

Habakkuk 2:2-3:"Then the LORD answered me and said, 'Record the vision and inscribe it on tablets, that the one who reads it may run. For the vision is yet for the appointed time; it hastens toward the goal, and **it will not fail.** Though it tarries, wait for it; for **it will certainly come,** it will not delay.'"

In these verses we can see that the Lord is the One Who fulfills prophecy and the fulfillment of it is certain. We know that God does not lie and nothing is too hard for Him (Hebrews 6:18, Jeremiah 32:27).

JW index **pg**.1, 2

Does the Watch Tower measure up to this test?

The Watch Tower has made numerous false prophecies. I have found that for the average person, many of these false prophecies are hard to verify. The local library does not collect old publications by the Watch Tower. It can be difficult (but not impossible) to find these old publications. I have decided to share one false prophecy that was printed on page 8 of the October 5, 1914 edition of the *New York Times*... I have chosen this false prophecy from among many others, because the average person can obtain it from the local library. I found it on microfilm at Southern Oregon University. If your library does not have it, simply ask if they can borrow it from another library, or if the library can photocopy the requested page from microfilm. The library will charge a small fee for this service.

You can also obtain an entire book of false prophecies, including this one, which was originally found in the *New York Times*. You can obtain the Book titled "*How to Answer a Jehovah's Witness* by Robert A. Morey. It was published by Bethany House Publishers, Minneapolis, MN, 55438. ISBN 0-87123-206-5

Another false prophecy can now be found at in the book titled Millions now living will never die. Go to PDF pg. 89-91, pg.98 & 111

You can also check the following link:

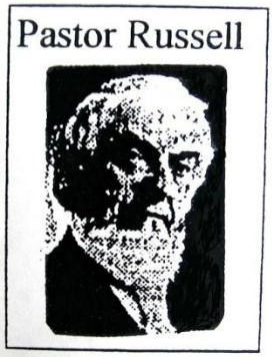
http://www.jwfacts.com/watchtower/jehovahs-prophet.php

Back to our Oct. 5, 1914 *New York Times* quotation. The following pages are the text as it appeared in the *New York Times*; I have re-typed it so all of the words are legible and easy to read. Copies from microfilm are readable, but not always easy on the eyes.

Read the article then answer the following questions:

What battle was prophesied to follow World War 1?
When will the kingdom be established on earth?
What date was assigned as the close of the 6,000 years since Adam's creation?
Is this a true or false prophecy, and how should you respond according to the Bible?

***New York Times*, N.Y, Monday, Oct.5, 1914**



"Pastor Russell addressed a very intelligent audience last evening at the New York City Temple. His discourse was based upon the text, 'Upon the earth distress of the nations with perplexity; the sea and the waves roaring; men's hearts failing for fear and for looking after those things that are coming upon the earth,' (Luke 21:25, 26) He said:

'Our Honorable President with praiseworthy intent has requested all Christian people to make this a day of prayer for peace in Europe. I have been asked to sermonize accordingly. However I cannot concur with our worthy President in this matter. Much as I appreciate peace — and I have labored all my life to be a peacemaker — I cannot pray the Almighty to change His plans to conform to those of our honored President.

'For 2,500 years, God through the Bible Prophets, has been telling His people about this great war and concerning the more terrible Armageddon which will follow it; and can we expect Him to reverse this programme at our behest?

'The prayers of these millions praying for the prosperity of the Germans and the extermination of the Allies, and the prayers of other millions for the successes of the Allies and the annihilation of the Germans, and the prayers of the Pope and our President and other good people that this awful war shall promptly cease will all go unanswered if I read my Bible aright. **The war will proceed and will eventuate in no glorious victory for any nation, but in the horrible mutilation and impoverishment of all. Next will follow the Armageddon of anarchy.**

'After that, peace, everlasting peace, may be hoped for because God has declared it!

It will be brought in by Messiah's Kingdom, for which so long we have prayed — "Thy Kingdom come!"

'For forty years I have been proclaiming this very war and its glorious outcome by sermons oral and printed, and in my books on Bible study in twenty languages. **Now, when the very year has come and the prophecy is being fulfilled, could I consistently ask the Almighty to change his programme? Nay! Rather my discourse will be, as announced, from the Master's words respecting the present "distress of nations with perplexity, *** men's hearts failing for fear of those things about to come upon the earth."**

'**GOD'S PART IN THE PRESENT WAR.**

'**Doubtless many will be shocked with my declaration that this war and the resulting greater calamity or of Divine permission and arrangement, clearly prophesied in scripture.** The gathering of the nations to this present struggle is referred to in the prophecy of Joel, where the weak nations are called upon to assert their strength and where all of them are commanded to go down to the valley of Jehoshaphat — the Valley of Graves —the cemetery outside the city of Jerusalem being used by the Prophet in illustration of terrible slaughter now going on.

'Surely this war brought more to the grave than any previous war; and it is only beginning. For years the nations, in harmony with Joel's prophecy, have "beating their plowshares into swords, and their pruning-hooks into spears." in the sense that they have been spending for military purposes money, which should properly have been spent on agricultural implements and developments.

'Apparently all the nations will yet be involved. Happy would it be if our own land shall escape! Our president [sic] and our Secretary of State are men of peace, and will surely do all in their power to avoid complications and war itself. Nevertheless the great nations of Europe, realizing how much they will be weakened by this war, will do all in their power to ensnare these United States, lest all conclusion of the war we should tower above the others financially and otherwise.

'WHY GOD PERMITS SIN AND DEATH

'Only as we look at the Divine Plan as a whole can we understand God's relationship with this bloody war-- and with all war. To the majority it is confusing to think that God would bring about any war. There is surely something wrong or there would not be such perplexity, for

the Lord tells His people concerning this time of trouble that they "need not be in darkness that that day should overtake them unawares." God's people should have general information regarding His plans and arrangements.

'Meaning have seen only small portions of the Divine Plan, and so have failed to grasp the great lengths, breadths, heights; and depths of God's great purpose. But whoever has an understanding of the great plan of God will ever after be able rightly to appreciate and to locate not only the events of today, but also everything that is coming: for the Bible outlines the history of man.

'The Scriptures clearly teach that our earth is the only rebellious province in all God's fair creation. In this little planet God has permitted sin to take its course-- to bud, to blossom, to bring forth its fruitage — that both men and angels may see the dire results of opposition to the Divine Government.

'The Bible tells us how this world became rebellious. It tells us that God did not create mankind imperfect, as we are today. Man was created perfect, an earthly being in the image of his Heavenly Creator. In the sense of having a moral character, but limited to earthly conditions. This perfect man was place was placed in a perfect home, in every way adapted to his needs. This Eden was especially prepared for him and he was to enjoy it. He was the king of the whole earth; and therefore his Creator instructed him that as his family increased he was to subdue the earth and develop it. Had mankind remained in harmony with God the world would have become as Eden.

'God foreknew just what would occur; however, He foreknew Adam's sin and fall, as well as the mental, moral, and physical degeneracy, which would result from the disobedience of our first parents. He foreknew our weakness and imperfection, our attempts at moral, religious, and mental reform and at mental and physical health. Yet He permitted all to come to pass. Sin entered the world, and has continued to rest upon the human family for six thousand years.

'God's penalty upon man is death, and it matters not whether that death come through war or pestilence or famine or by slower processes. Meantime, God would use all of man's experiences of the past six thousand years as a great lesson on the exceeding sinfulness of sin and on the utter hopelessness of any other help than that which God Himself has provided.

'From the creation of Adam until now has been a period of six thousand year [sic] — days—man's work week — during which he has been permitted to try everything he could imagine for his own relief from sin and its penalty of death.

'So far from gaining life everlasting for our race, all our efforts of [sic] accomplished nothing. Our most learned physicians and specialists declare that the world is on the verge of collapse; and that at the present rate of increase there would not, in one hundred and sixty, [sic] years, be enough sane people in the world to care for the insane. They tell us that various diseases are increasing so rapidly as to endanger the race in a very short time; and that this is so not withstanding the fact that sanitary conditions are made necessary even to the extent of individual drinking cups.

'Our only hope lies in the great Seventh Day, the antitypical Sabbath. In it Messiah, associating with Himself the saintly ones of this Gospel Age, will set up the Divine Kingdom amongst men—a spiritual Kingdom, not an earthly one, but ruling amongst mankind, blessing and uplifting them. For a thousand years the work of uplifting will progress until all the willing and obedient will have attained again the lost likeness of their Creator; and the whole earth will be their Paradise.

'**Times of the Gentiles**

'Amongst other lessons which God has been teaching mankind is the fact that they are incapable of establishing a government such as is necessary for the real blessing and uplifting of the race. God appointed Israel after the flesh to be His typical Kingdom for a time and selected King David and his posterity to be rulers. By and by He cut these off, discontinuing the earthly typical Kingdom.

'The last monarch of David's line was King Zedekiah, of whom we read: "O thou profane and wicked Prince, whose time has come that iniquity shall have an end. Remove the diadem, take off the crown. *** I will overturn, overturn, overturn it until He comes whose right it is, and I will give it to Him." (Ezekiel xxi., 25-27). Messiah is the One whose right it is—Jesus the Head, the Church His Body — on the spirit plane.

'Certain Scriptures indicate that the period during which God's Kingdom would be removed would be seven prophetic Times, each 360 years long. Seven Times would therefore equal 2,520 years. Reckoned from the time of King Zedekiah, that period ends this year; for, according to the Scriptures, King Zedekiah's crown was taken away in 606 B.C. If so, with the close of the present year Messiah should take to Himself His great power and begin His glorious Reign of a thousand years, the beginning of which according to the Bible will be a very dark hour— "a Time of Trouble such as was not since there was a nation," "no, nor ever shall be" the like again. —Daniel, xii, 1; Matthew, xxiv, 21.

'When God removed His typical Kingdom, 606 B.C., He gave to the Gentiles authority or permission to do their best in governing the world in bringing it in righteousness and happiness. That we might know all this, He gave a dream to Nebuchadnezzar, King of Babylon, and sent the interpretation of that dream though the Prophet Daniel. The dream showed a great image, whose head was of gold, representing Babylon; its breast and arms of silver, representing the succeeding government of the Medes and Persians; the belly of brass, representing the Grecian Empire, which followed the Medo-Persian; and its legs of iron, representing Rome, the government of the Caesars. Each of these governments has had universal sway, each has shown the best it could do for humanity, and each has failed.

'Next came the feet of the image which were of iron smeared with clay, thus made to resemble stone feet. These iron feet represented the Holy Roman Empire, which was really a part of the Roman Empire and the divisions of which are at war with each other today. The dream and its interpretation showed that a stone cut without hands stuck the image in its feet, ground them to powder and utterly destroyed the entire image. This stone represented Messiah's Kingdom, which will ultimately fill the whole earth, according to this prophecy.

'The clay smeared on the iron feet, making them like stone, represented the fact that the present Roman governments Europe claim to be Christ's Kingdom. On their coins, and otherwise, they claimed to represent God. They have been deceived into thinking and speaking of themselves as Christendom, which signify Christ's Kingdom. In reality they are the last representatives of Gentile power— "kingdoms of this world"— the toes of the image of Gentile supremacy of which King Nebuchadnezzar dreamed.

'The present war will weaken the nations, draining not only their life blood, but also their wealth: and it will demonstrate the inefficiency of all Gentile Kingdoms to bring to the world peace, righteousness, satisfactory government. But Messiah's Kingdom, which will then be inaugurated, will be "the desire of all nations."

'**The Prophetic Forecast**

'This war, and anarchy of Armageddon, which will follow it, will prove conclusively the need of Divine interposition in human affairs. As Jesus said, speaking of the present trouble and the resulting anarchy, "Unless, those days shall be shorten, there would be no flesh be saved." So virulent, so selfish would that strive be that our civilization would perish did not God through Messiah's Kingdom, the Elect, intervene to bring order out of chaos.

'Doubtless earth's great rulers have done the best they knew how to do for their peoples. Some of our very best laws came from Julius Caesar, in combination with the Mosaic code. Some of the world's rulers today are also doing their best: but they are confused. Having a false idea of what constitutes Christ's Kingdom, they seem to think it their mission to conquer the world. They also believe that they foresee a general upraising of socialism, and their hearts are failing them, fearing the things coming upon the earth.

'While they knew that this would be the worst war ever known, yet they preferred it to that which they were striving to ward off and which they have succeeded in keeping off for the present. But they have lost their best blood, their best energy, their money, commerce & c.: [sic] and when the war is ended, these nations, sorrowful and famine-stricken will be greatly angered at their rulers. Then will come the determination something like socialism. This the Governments will endeavor to put down, into some extent they will succeed. Then will come the great explosion the Armageddon of the Scriptures. Then will be the Time of Trouble, immediately preceding the Messianic Kingdom, which will inaugurate the long-promised Peace on Earth.'" (END QUOTE)

After reading the article you can answer the following questions:

What battle was prophesied to follow World War 1?
(Answer — Armageddon, pgs. 461,462,465)

When will the kingdom be established on earth?
(Answer — At the close of that present year in 1914, or at the end of World War 1 and Armageddon pg. 464, 465)

What date was assigned as the close of the 6,000 years since Adam's creation?
(Answer — 2,520 years after 606 BC; 2,520-606 = 1914. The time of the article was 1914. This is shown not only in the math by the dates he gave us, but he also stated on pgs. 463, 464 "that *period ends this year*".)

Is this a true or false prophecy, and how should you respond according to the Bible?
(Answer — It is a false prophecy because it did not happen as stated. The test of a prophet of God was given on pgs. 459.)

Table of Contents pg 1, 2, 3, 4 Jehovah Witness Index pg. 1, 2
JW index pg. 1, 2

A DIFFERENT GOD

Although Jehovah's Witnesses would agree with historic Christianity on some of the attributes of God, they only apply these attributes to God the Father. Jehovah's Witnesses constantly misrepresent and attack the doctrine of the Trinity. I find it interesting that the Watch Tower Society has numerous times defined the Trinity correctly, yet it often defines the Trinity incorrectly as well. One can only wonder, do they from time-to-time forget how to define Trinity, or do they purposely misrepresent the Trinity to suit their own purposes?

JW index pg. pg. 1, 2

Following is a quote by the *Watch Tower* on one of the occasions when they misrepresented the doctrine of the Trinity.

The *Watch Tower*, April 1, **1970**, pg.210 **(JW)** **(PDF pg. 210)**

"It may be necessary for us to teach those with whom we study the Bible how to reason on Scripture texts. For example, Mark 12:29 might be read: 'Hear, O Israel, Jehovah our God is one Jehovah.' Ask the student, 'How many Jehovah's are there?' Let him answer. The answer is obvious that there is only one Jehovah. When he discerns this, you have caused him to register an important fact in his mind that he might otherwise have missed. Help him to appreciate further what this means to him. Reason with him, perhaps in this way: 'If he is one Jehovah, then could he be three gods, God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Ghost, as the Trinitarians teach?' Again, let him answer. 'No, Jehovah could not be three gods, for the Bible plainly says he is one God.' Now, you have caused the student to think on a basic Scriptural truth and to understand that Jehovah is but one God. You have also exposed a basic false doctrine —the doctrine of the Trinity."

The *Watch Tower* on this occasion gave a false definition of the Trinity, and then argued that the false definition was not Biblical. Of course the false definition is not Biblical — there is indeed only one God (Isaiah 44:8). The Trinity however is not revealed as unbiblical here; rather, the false definition of Trinity is revealed as unbiblical instead. Next, the *Watch Tower* declared that this exposed the false doctrine of the Trinity. Trinitarians do not teach that Jehovah is three gods, as the *Watch Tower* suggested.

Nelson's Illustrated Bible Dictionary defines the TRINITY as follows**:**

"The coexistence of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit in the unity of the Godhead (divine nature or essence). The doctrine of the trinity means that within the being and activity of the **one God** there are three distinct persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit."

One could just as easily turn this example around by asking the Jehovah's Witness how many Gods there are. The Witness will most likely answer, "One." Then ask, "Are all other gods false gods?" The answer should be, "Yes." A final question — if Jehovah is the Almighty God, then who is Jesus (*The New Worlds Translatio*n, in John 1:1, says that Jesus is a god)? The Bible clearly teaches there is only one God (Isaiah 44:8). Some Jehovah's Witnesses could become confused at this point; Jesus must be the true God, or a false god — otherwise you have two Gods. However, the Jehovah's Witness that is well informed by Watch Tower literature will declare that Jesus only "carries the title" of "god" or "lord"; He is not a true God, such as Jehovah is. Watch Tower literature declares that there is only one Almighty God, and any other god is merely a carrying the title.

Following are three quotes from the Watch Tower Society concerning the Trinity.

Knowledge 1995, pages 30-31 **(JW)** **(PDF pg. 31-32)**
"JEHOVAH OUR GOD IS ONE
"The ancient Egyptians worshiped many gods, but Jehovah is 'a God exacting exclusive devotion' (Exodus 20:5). Moses reminded the Israelites that 'Jehovah our God is one Jehovah' (Deuteronomy6:4). Jesus Christ repeated those words (Mark 12:28, 29).Therefore, those who accept the Bible as God's Word do not worship a Trinity consisting of three persons or gods in one. In fact, the word 'Trinity' does not even appear in the Bible. The true God is one Person, separate from Jesus Christ (John 14:28; 1 Corinthians 15:28).God's holy spirit is not a person. It is Jehovah's active force, used by the Almighty to accomplish his purposes — Genesis 1:2; Acts 2:1-4, 32, 33; 2 Peter 1:20, 21.

(PDF pg. 75-76)
The *Watch Tower*, Feb. 1, **1974**, pg.75 **(JW)**
"Does Christianity Require Belief in a Trinity?
"ALL major religions of Christendom accept the Trinity doctrine as an article of faith. The more than 250 churches belonging to the World Council of Churches confess 'the Lord Jesus Christ as God and Savior according to the Scriptures and therefore seek to fulfill together their common calling to the glory of the one God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit.'
"While the views of the various religious bodies belonging to this fellowship vary radically, all are required to be in agreement that the 'Father, Son and Holy Spirit' are but 'one God.' Hence, rejection of the Trinity doctrine is, in effect, regarded as a rejection of Christianity.....

"So, then, can the Trinity doctrine be viewed as Christian? No, for it denies the clear Biblical statements that Jesus Christ is the 'Son of God,' the 'firstborn of all creation' and the 'beginning of the creation by God' (John 20:31; Colossians 1:15; Revelation 3:14). It falsely claims that he is coequal and coeternal with the Father.

"True Christianity, therefore, requires that we reject the Trinity doctrine as false, as an 'invention' of sinful men. We should worship the Father as the only true God, and do so through his firstborn Son Jesus Christ, the One who occupies the first place among all of God's intelligent creatures —Colossians 3:17." (End Quote)

Let God Be True, 1946, page 82 **(JW)** **(PDF pg.100)**
"The obvious conclusion therefore is that Satan is the originator of the 'trinity' doctrine."

The Watch Tower puts out a 32-page pamphlet to argue against the Trinity. The next three quotes are from that pamphlet.

(PDF pg. 4)
Should You Believe in the Trinity?, 1989, page 5 **(JW)**
"However, contending that since the Trinity is such a confusing mystery, it must have come from divine revelation creates another major problem. Why? Because divine revelation itself does not allow for such a view of God: 'God is not a God of confusion.' —1 Corinthians 14:33, Revised Standard Version (RS)."

(PDF pg. 6)
Should You Believe in the Trinity?, 1989, page 6 **(JW)**
"Similarly, in his book *The Triune God*, Jesuit Edmund Fortman admits: 'The Old Testament . . . tells us nothing explicitly or by necessary implication of a Triune God who is Father, Son and Holy Spirit.....There is no evidence that any sacred writer even suspected the existence of a [Trinity] within the Godhead. . . . Even to see in [the 'Old Testament'] suggestions or foreshadowings or 'veiled signs' of the trinity of persons, is to go beyond the words and intent of
the sacred writers.'"

(PDF pg. 7)
Should You Believe in the Trinity?, 1989, page 7 **(JW)**
"The formulation 'one God in three Persons' was not solidly established, certainly not fully assimilated into Christian life and its profession of faith, prior to the end of the 4th century…
"Summing up the historical evidence, Alvan Lamson says in *The Church of the First Three Centuries*: 'The modern popular doctrine of the Trinity…derives no support from the language of Justin [Martyr]: and this observation may be extended to all the ante-Nicene Fathers; that is, to all Christian writers for three centuries after the birth of Christ. It is true, they speak of the Father, Son, and…holy Spirit, but not as co-equal, not as one numerical essence, not as Three in One, in any sense now admitted by Trinitarians. The very reverse is the fact.'
"Thus, the testimony of the Bible and of history makes clear that the Trinity was unknown throughout Biblical times and for several centuries thereafter."

In the Watch Tower quotes so far, we have seen the following:
The doctrine of the Trinity has been misrepresented by declaring it to be a belief in three gods, and with this false definition the Trinity is declared to be untrue;
Those who believe the Bible do not worship a Trinity;
The word "Trinity" does not even appear in the Bible;
The true God is one Person, separate from Jesus Christ;
God's Holy Spirit is not a person, but rather is Jehovah's active force;
The doctrine of the Trinity cannot be viewed as Christian;
True Christianity, therefore, requires that we reject the Trinity doctrine as false, as an "invention" of sinful men;
Satan is the originator of the "Trinity" doctrine;

The doctrine of Trinity is confusing; therefore God cannot be the author, as He is not a God of confusion;
The Trinity is not in the Old Testament;
The Trinity was not developed until the 4th century AD; and
The Ante-Nicene Fathers before the 4th century did not teach or believe in the Trinity.

To answer these statements we must show:
The doctrine of the Trinity is taught in the Bible in both the Old and New Testaments
Jesus is God (see *A Different Jesus*,);
God the Holy Spirit is a person, not just an active force (see *A Different Holy Spirit*,); and
The doctrine of the Trinity was taught and believed by the early church before the 4th century (see *Watch Tower Literature*,).

JW index **pg**. **pg**. 1, 2

THE TRINITY IS TAUGHT IN THE BIBLE

In this section, Scripture used is from the *New World Translation of the Holy Scriptures* by the Watch Tower Society. The *N.W.T.* is actually a very poor and biased translation — but this is the accepted version of the Jehovah's Witnesses— so, if the verses being discussed have not been perverted too badly, the *N.W.T.* is the version that will be used in this discussion. In cases in which the text has been twisted, and the meaning has been changed, the *New American Standard* is quoted and is abbreviated as *N.A.S.* (For further information on the *N.W.T.*, turn to the section entitled *Watch Tower Literature*.)
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Historically, the nature of God has been referred to as the Trinity. This means that the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit are three separate persons which constitute only one God. The word *"Trinity"* is not in the Bible. This simply is the name of a doctrine or idea that is taught in the Bible. Jehovah's Witnesses also use terms that are not found in the Bible, such as "Theocratic kingdom". We also use the word "omnipotent" to describe God as having unlimited power. The word "omnipotent" is not in the Bible, yet the Bible clearly teaches that God has unlimited power. People who argue against the Trinity often misrepresent the doctrine by stating that it is a belief in three gods. Similarly, they often point out passages in which Jesus prays to the Father; these people then declare that Jesus cannot be the Father. This type of argument shows a lack of understanding of the doctrine. Let me try to explain this doctrine as clearly as I can. God the Father is called God, but this does not mean that he is Jesus, nor does it mean that he is the Holy Spirit.

The Father is referred to as "God" in —
Romans 1:7 (*N.W.T.*): "to all those who are in Rome as God's beloved ones, called to be holy ones: May YOU have undeserved kindness and peace from God our Father and [the] Lord Jesus Christ." **(PDF pg. 1405)**

Jesus the Son is also referred to as "God", but this does not mean that He is the Father, nor does it mean he is the Holy Spirit. Jesus is referred to as "God" in —

John 1:1 and 14 *(N.A.S.)*: "(1) In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." "(14) And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth."

(Notice that this verse states that God became flesh. In context this "Word" is Jesus. See also Philippians 2:5-8.)

John 20: 27-29 (*N.W.T.*): "Next he said to Thomas, 'Put your finger here, and see my hands, and take your hand and stick it into my side, and stop being unbelieving but become believing.' In answer Thomas said to Him, 'My Lord and my God!' Jesus said to him, 'Because you have seen me have you believed? Happy are those who do not see and yet believe.'" **(PDF pg. 1359)**

(Notice that Jesus did not rebuke Thomas when he called Him "Lord" and "God". A logical conclusion to make from this is that Jesus is God the Son.)

The Holy Spirit is also called "God", but this does not mean that he is the Father; nor does it mean that he is Jesus. The Holy Spirit is called God in —

Acts 5:3-4 (*N.W.T.*): "But Peter said, 'An-a-ni'as, why has Satan emboldened you to play false to the holy spirit and to hold back secretly some of the price of the field? As long as it remained with you did it not remain yours, and after it was sold did it not continue in your control? Why was it that you purposed such a deed as this in your heart? You have played false, not to men, but to God.'" **(PDF pg. 1366)**

(Notice that Peter stated that Ananias "played false to", or, in other words, "lied" to the Holy Spirit. Then in the next breath, he states that Ananias had played false to "God".)

Hebrews 3:7-11 (*N.W.T.*): "For this reason, just as the holy spirit says: 'Today if YOU people listen to his own voice, do not harden YOUR hearts as on the occasion of causing bitter anger, as in the day of making the test in the wilderness, in which YOUR forefathers made a test of me with a trial, and yet they had seen my works for forty years. For this reason I became disgusted with this generation and said, "They always go astray in their hearts, and they themselves have not come to know my ways." So I swore in my anger, "They shall not enter into my rest."'"
(PDF pg. 1493)

Here we see that the Holy Spirit said that he that was provoked, and swore in his wrath, "They shall not enter into my rest".

Psalm 95:6-11 (*N.W.T.*): "O come in, let us worship and bow down; Let us kneel before Jehovah our Maker. For he is our God, and we are the people of his pasturage and the sheep of his hand. Today if YOU people listen to his own voice, Do not harden YOUR hearts as as Mer'i-bah. As in the day of Mas'sah in the wilderness. When YOUR forefathers put me to the proof: They examined me, they also saw my activity. For forty years I kept feeling a loathing toward [that] generation. And I proceeded to say: 'They are a people wayward at heart, And they themselves have not come to know my ways'. Concerning whom I swore in my anger: 'They shall not enter into my resting-place.'" **(PDF pg. 793)**

Here we are told that "Jehovah our Maker" is "God". It is He that was provoked and swore in His wrath, "They shall not enter into my resting-place". Conclusion God the Holy Spirit said this (see also Numbers 14:22-23).

Following is a similar reference, in which Jehovah is speaking in the Old Testament, and in the New Testament, the Holy Spirit is referred to as the speaker. We will compare Isaiah 6:8-10 with Acts 28:25-27.

Isaiah 6:8-10 (*N.W.T.*): "And I began to hear **the voice of Jehovah saying**: 'Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?' And I proceeded to say: 'Here I am! Send me.' And he went on to say: 'Go, and you must say to this people, "Hear again and again, O men, but do not understand; and see again and again, but do not get any knowledge." Make the heart of this people unreceptive, and make their very ears unresponsive, and paste their very eyes together, that they may not see with their eyes and with their ears they may not hear, and that their own heart may not understand and that they may not actually turn back and get healing for themselves.'" **(PDF pg. 894-895)**

Acts 28:25-27 (N.W.T) So, because they were at disagreement with one another, they began to depart, while Paul made this one comment:"**The holy spirit aptly spoke** through Isaiah the prophet to YOUR forefathers, **26** saying, 'Go to this people and say: "By hearing, YOU will hear but by no means understand; and, looking, YOU will look but by no means see. **27** For the heart of this people has grown unreceptive, and with their ears they have heard without response, and they have shut their eyes; that they should never see with their eyes and hear with their ears and understand with their heart and turn back, and I should heal them." **(PDF pg. 1404)**

We have just seen that the Father, Jesus the Son, and the Holy Spirit are all called "God". These three are all called "God", yet they are also three separate persons. They are not all the same person. This is clearly shown in the following passage, in which Jesus is the speaker:

John 14: 16-17 *(N.W.T.)*: "and I will request the Father and he will give YOU another helper to be with YOU forever, the spirit of the truth, which the world cannot receive, because it neither beholds it nor knows it. YOU know it, because it remains with YOU and is in YOU." **(PDF pg. 1350)**

Table of Contents pg 1, 2, 3, 4 Jehovah Witness Index pg. 1, 2
JW index pg. 1, 2

THERE IS ONLY ONE GOD

Isaiah 44:6-8 (*N.A.S.*): "Thus says the LORD, the King of Israel and his Redeemer, the LORD of hosts: 'I am the first and I am the last, and there is no God besides me. And who is like me? Let him proclaim and declare it; yes, let him recount it to me in order, from the time that I established the ancient nation. And let them declare to them the things that are coming and the events that are going to take place. Do not tremble and do not be afraid; have I not long since announced it to you and declared it? And you are My witnesses. Is there any God besides me, or is there any other Rock? I know of none.'"

Did you notice that the King of Israel and his Redeemer seem to be speaking in the plural sense? Yet, "I am the first and I am the last, and there is no God besides Me" is singular. At the end of this passage, the Lord asks if there are any other Gods besides Him, stating that He (God) does not know of any! How can there be other Gods that even God Himself knows nothing about?

Isaiah 43:10 (*N.W.T.*): " 'YOU are my witnesses,' is the utterance of Jehovah, 'even my servant whom I have chosen, in order that YOU may know and have faith in me, and that YOU may understand that I am the same One. Before me there was no God formed, and after me there has been none.'" **(PDF pg. 936)**

This passage even states that there will be no other Gods in the future.

JW index . pg. 1, 2

Thus far, we have seen that the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit are three separate persons. All three persons are called "God", and there is only one God. This is also true with the word "creator"; all three are called "creator", yet there is only one creator.

THE FATHER IS CREATOR

Isaiah 45:18 (*N.W.T.*): "For this is what Jehovah has said, the Creator of the heavens, He the [true] God, the Former of the earth and the Maker of it, He the One who firmly established it, who did not create it simply for nothing, who formed it even to be inhabited: 'I am Jehovah, and there is no one else.'" **(PDF pg. 940)** (See also Isaiah 42:5 and 1 Corinthians 8:6.)

JESUS IS CREATOR

Colossians 1:13 (*N.A.S.*): "For He delivered us from the domain of darkness, and transferred us to the kingdom of His beloved Son, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins. And He is the image of the invisible God, the first-born of all creation. For by Him all things were created, both in the heavens and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities-- all things have been created by Him and for Him."

John 1:3 (N.W.T.): "All things came into existence through him, and apart from him not even one thing came into existence." **(PDF pg. 1327)** (See also Hebrews 1:2, 1 Corinthians 8:6.)

THE SPIRIT IS CREATOR

Job 26:13 (*N.A.S.*): "By his spirit he hath garnished the heavens; his hand hath formed the crooked serpent."

Genesis 1:2 (*N.A.S.*): "And the earth was formless and void, and darkness was over the surface of the deep; and the Spirit of God was moving over the surface of the waters**."**

Psalm 104:30 (*N.W.T.*): "If you send forth your spirit, they are created; And you make the face of the ground new." **(PDF pg. 800)**

GOD CREATED BY HIMSELF

Isaiah 44:24 (*N.W.T.*): "This is what Jehovah has said, your Repurchaser and the Former of you from the belly: 'I, Jehovah, am doing everything, stretching out the heavens by myself, laying out the earth. Who was with me?'" **(PDF pg. 938)**

The Watch Tower claims that Jehovah created Jesus and then through Jesus created everything else. The problem is that even their own *N.W.T.* states that apart from Jesus, not even one thing came into existence (John 1:3) — while in Isaiah 44:24,Jehovah states that He did everything by Himself. Jehovah even asks, "Who was with me?" One Jehovah's Witnesses shared this illustration with me, to try to explain this: *"A contractor can point at a building and say, 'This is the building that I built.' In reality others were involved, but it does not make the contractor's statement untrue."* The problem I have with this illustration is that the contractor could not specifically say that he built the building "by himself", and he probably wouldn't ask, "Who was with me?" Jehovah could not say that He created by Himself, and ask, "Who was with me?", if the Father and Jesus were not one God. To some people these verses would seem to be in conflict with each other. They are not in conflict at all: these three persons constitute only one God!

Deuteronomy 6:4 (*N.A.S.*):"Hear, O Israel! The LORD is our God, the LORD is one!"

We find further plurality in the one God of the Old Testament. For example:

Genesis 1:26-27 *(N.W.T.)*:"And God went on to say: 'Let **us** make man in **our** image, according to **our** likeness, and let them have in subjection the fish of the sea and the flying creatures of the heavens and the domestic animals and all the earth and every moving animal that is moving upon the earth.' And God proceeded to create the man in **his** image, in God's image **he** created him; male and female he created them." **(PDF pg. 8)**

"Us" and "our" are plural. "His" and "he" are singular. This shows that there is plurality in the "one" God; there are not three Gods, but rather three persons in the one God.

JW index pg. 1, 2

THE ENTIRE TRINITY MENTIONED IN ONE PASSAGE IN THE OLD TESTAMENT…

Isaiah 48:12-16 (*N.W.T.*): "12) Listen to me, O Jacob, and you Israel **my** called one. I am the same One. I am the first. Moreover, I am the last. 13) Moreover, my own hand laid the foundation of the earth, and my own right hand extended out the heavens. I am calling to them, that they may keep standing together. 14) Be collected together, all YOU people, and hear. Who among them has told these things? Jehovah himself has loved him. He will do what is his delight upon Babylon, and his own arm will be upon the Chal·de'ans. 15) I myself have spoken. Moreover, I have called him. I have brought him in, and there will be a making of his way successful. 16) Come near to me, YOU people. Hear this. From the start I have spoken in no place of concealment at all. From the time of its occurring I have been there. And now the Sovereign Lord Jehovah himself has sent me, even his spirit." **(PDF pg. 942-943)**

In verse 12, God is the speaker, the one who has called Israel. He states, "I am the same One. I am the first. Moreover, I am the last." "I" and "One" are singular. Follow the context down and you will see that the speaker who is God, who identifies himself as, "I am the first. Moreover, I am the last", is also the same speaker in verse 16. The context does not change speakers. Then this single person (God) speaking says, "And now the Sovereign Lord Jehovah himself has sent me, even his spirit." God is speaking, yet he says the Lord sent Him. Not only has the "Sovereign Lord Jehovah" sent Him (God), but also He (God) was sent by the Lord Jehovah's spirit. This passage clearly shows that three separate entities make up a singular God.

JW index pg. 1, 2

UNITY IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

Matthew 3:16-17 (N.W.T.): "After being baptized Jesus immediately came up from the water; and, look! the heavens were opened up, and he saw descending like a dove God's spirit coming upon him. Look! Also, there was a voice from the heavens that said: 'This is my Son, the beloved, whom I have approved.'" **(PDF pg. 1218)**

Matthew 28:19 (*N.W.T.*): "Go therefore and make disciples of people of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the holy spirit…" **(PDF pg. 1256)**

In these passages we see all three: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are separate, and also in unity. We can see the Trinity in the birth of Christ as well.

Matthew 1:20 (*N.W.T.*): "But after he had thought these things over, look! Jehovah's angel appeared to him in a dream, saying: 'Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary your wife home, for that which has been begotten in her is by holy spirit.'" **(PDF pg. 1217)**

Matthew 16:16-17 *(N.W.T.)*: "In answer Simon Peter said: 'You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.' In response Jesus said to him: 'Happy you are, Simon son of Jo'nah, because flesh and blood did not reveal [it] to you, but my Father who is in the heavens did.'" **(PDF pg. 1237)**

That which was conceived in Mary was of the Holy Spirit. Jesus is not called the "Son of the Holy Spirit" —Jesus is called the "Son of God". Jesus refers to God the Father as His Father, yet that which was conceived in Mary was of the Holy Spirit.

JW index **pg**. 1, 2

On page 5 of the pamphlet, *"Should You Believe in the Trinity?",The* Watch Tower, claims that the Trinity is hard to understand; therefore, the doctrine is not to be believed. To support this claim, The WatchTower cites 1 Corinthians 14:33: "God is not a God of confusion…". But when taken in context, this verse refers to maintaining order in public worship. It has nothing to do with whether or not God is complex. Anybody who has read the book of Revelation knows that there are things in the Bible that are a little confusing. Whether the Trinity is hard to understand is not the point. The point is, does the Bible teach the doctrine of the Trinity? The fact is, the Bible *does* teach this doctrine. Should it surprise us that God is complex? I do not fully understand the law of gravity. But I know if I step off a cliff I will fall, even if I do not understand or believe this law of gravity. The Bible teaches that there are three separate persons that constitute only one God; therefore, I believe it. I believe it because the Bible is the Word of God.

JW index **pg**. 1, 2

The following are other comparisons which might cause some to believe Scripture conflicts itself; until the reader recognizes that there are three persons within the one God. First, we will see that both the Father and Jesus are called the "first" and the "last". How many "firsts", "lasts", "Alphas", "Omegas", "beginnings" and "ends" can there be? The answer is, there is **only one**. There is only one God (Isaiah 44:8).

GOD THE FATHER

Isaiah 41:4 *(N.W.T.)*: "Who has been active and has done [this], calling out the generations from the start? 'I, Jehovah, the First One; and with the last ones I am the same.'" **(PDF pg. 932)**

Isaiah 44:6 (*N.W.T.*): "This is what Jehovah has said, the King of Israel and the Repurchaser of him, Jehovah of armies, 'I am the first and I am the last, and besides me there is no God.'" **(PDF pg. 937)**

Isaiah 48:12-13 *(N.W.T.)*: "Listen to me, O Jacob, and you Israel my called one. I am the same One. I am the first. Moreover, I am the last. Moreover, my own hand laid the foundation of the earth." **(PDF pg. 942)**

JESUS

Revelation 1:7-8 (*N.A.S.*) "Behold, He is coming with the clouds, and every eye will see Him, even those who pierced Him; and all the tribes of the earth will mourn over Him. Even so. Amen. 'I am the Alpha and the Omega,' says the Lord God, 'who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty.'" (Jesus is the one coming with the clouds; see Matthew 24:30, 26:64; Mark 13:26, 14:62; and 1 Thessalonians 4:17.)

Revelation 1:7-8 *(N.W.T.)*: "Look! He is coming with the clouds, and every eye will see him, and those who pierced him; and all the tribes of the earth will beat themselves in grief because of him. Yes, Amen. 'I am the Al'pha and the O·me'ga' says Jehovah God, 'the One who is and who was and who is coming, the Almighty.'" **(PDF pg. 1526)** (Who is coming? Jesus is coming.)

Revelation 1:17-18 (*N.W.T.*): "And when I saw him, I fell as dead at his feet. And he laid his right hand upon me and said: 'Do not be fearful. I am the First and the Last, and the living one; and I became dead, but, look! I am living forever and ever, and I have the keys of death and of Ha'des.'" **(PDF pg. 1527)** (The first and last died. Who died? Jesus died.)

Revelation 22:13-16 (*N.W.T.*): "I am the Al'pha and the O·me'ga, the first and the last, the beginning and the end. Happy are those who wash their robes, that the authority [to go] to the trees of life may be theirs and that they may gain entrance into the city by its gates. Outside are the dogs and those who practice spiritism and the fornicators and the murderers and the idolaters and everyone liking and carrying on a lie. I, Jesus, sent my angel to bear witness to YOU people of these things for the congregations. I am the root and the offspring of David, and the bright morning star.'" **(PDF pg. 1547)** (Who is the Al'pha and the O·me'ga, the first and the last? It is Jesus.)

Next we will see that your body is a temple of God, your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit, and it is Christ that dwells in you. How can this be? ANSWER: These three persons make only one God.

YOUR BODY IS A TEMPLE OF GOD

2 Corinthians 6:16 (*N.W.T.*): "And what agreement does God's temple have with idols? For we are a temple of a living God; just as God said: 'I shall reside among them and walk among [them], and I shall be their God, and they will be my people.'" **(PDF pg. 1445)**

1 Corinthians 3:16 (*N.W.T.*): "Do YOU not know that YOU people are God's temple, and that the spirit of God dwells in YOU?" **(PDF pg. 1425)**

YOUR BODY IS A TEMPLE OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

1 Corinthians 6:19-20 (*N.W.T.*): "What! Do YOU not know that the body of YOU people is [the] temple of the holy spirit within YOU, which YOU have from God? Also, YOU do not belong to yourselves, for YOU were bought with a price. By all means, glorify God in the body of YOU people." **(PDF pg. 1428)** (Jesus\God paid the price [Acts 20:28].)

CHRIST DWELLS IN YOU

Galatians 2:20 (*N.A.S.*): "I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me, and delivered Himself up for me."

Next we will see that God will not give His glory to another. Yet Jesus shared this glory with Him. How can this be? ANSWER: They are one God.

Isaiah 42:8 (*N.W.T.*): "I am Jehovah. That is my name; and to no one else shall I give my own glory, neither my praise to graven images." **(PDF pg. 934)**

John 17:5 (*N.W.T.*): "So now you, Father, glorify me alongside yourself with the glory that I had alongside you before the world was." **(PDF pg. 1353)**

Who raised Jesus from the dead? The answer is God the Father, Jesus, and the Holy Spirit all raised Jesus from the dead.

1 Corinthians 6:14 *(N.W.T.*): "But God both raised up the Lord and will raise us up out of [death] through his power." **(PDF pg. 1427)** (See also Acts 2:24, Acts 13:30, Romans 6:4.)

John 2:19-21 (*N.W.T.*): "In answer Jesus said to them: 'Break down this temple, and in three days I will raise it up. Therefore the Jews said: 'This temple was built in forty-six years, and will you raise it up in three days?' But he was talking about the temple of his body." **(PDF pg. 1330)** (See also John 10:17-18.)

Romans 8:11 (*N.W.T.*): "If, now, the **spirit** of him that raised up Jesus from the dead **dwells in YOU**, he that raised up Christ Jesus from the dead will also make YOUR mortal bodies alive through his spirit that resides in YOU." **(PDF pg. 1413)** (See also 1 Peter 3:18.)

JW index **pg**. 1, 2

You may also want to read the following:

What about accusations that the Trinity is a doctrine derived from the 3rd or 4th century? (Jehovah Witness doctrine)

What about the idea that there is three separate God's that make up the Godhead as taught by Mormonism? ,,,,,(No other God's)

JW index **pg**. 1, 2

A DIFFERENT JESUS

The Watch Tower Society says that the Son of God is a mighty god, but not Jehovah, who is the only Almighty God. Jesus is a created being — also known as Michael the Archangel. They say their Jesus should not be worshipped. They also say that Jesus was raised *spiritually* from the dead (not bodily). These beliefs are broken down into 5 categories. First these categories are presented in Watchtower publications. Then there will be a Christian response to these 5 categories. These claims can be verified in their books, in the following locations:

JW index **pg**. 1, 2

1. Jesus is a created being.

Reasoning from the Scriptures, pg. 209 **(JW)** **(PDF pg. 208)**
"Jesus Christ - Definition: The only-begotten Son of God, the only Son produced by Jehovah alone. This Son is the firstborn of all creation. By means of him all other things in heaven and on earth were created. He is the second-greatest personage in the universe." A19

Aid to Bible Understanding, pg. 918 **(JW)** **(PDF pg.918)**
"Thus the Scriptures identify the Word (Jesus in his prehuman existence) as God's first creation, his firstborn Son. That Jehovah was truly the Father or Life-giver to this firstborn Son, was actually a creature of God, is evident from Jesus' own statements." A20

Knowledge pg. 39 **(JW)** **(PDF pg.40)**
"Jesus was called God's 'only-begotten Son' because Jehovah created him directly(John 3:16). As 'the firstborn of all creation, 'Jesus was then used by God to create all other things (Colossians 1:15; Revelation 3:14). John 1:1 says that 'the Word' (Jesus in his prehuman existence) was with God 'in the beginning.' So the Word was with Jehovah when 'the heavens and the earth' were created. God was addressing the Word when He said: 'Let us make man in our image' (Genesis 1:1, 26). Likewise, the Word must have been God's beloved 'master worker,' described at Proverbs 8:22-31 as wisdom personified, laboring at Jehovah's side in the making of all things. After Jehovah brought him into existence, the Word spent ages with God in heaven before becoming a man on earth." A22

"What Do Jehovah's Witnesses Believe?"(1987 tract under publication symbols T14), pg. 2 **(JW)**
"However, since Jesus said that he is 'God's Son' and that the 'Father sent me forth', Jehovah's Witnesses believe that God is greater than Jesus (John 10:36; 6:57). Jesus himself acknowledged: 'The Father is greater than I am' (John 14:28; 8:28). Thus we do not believe that Jesus is equal with the Father, as the Trinity doctrine says. Rather, we believe that **he was created by God** and that he is subordinate to Him." F

JW index **pg**. 1, 2

2. Jesus is a god, but not the Almighty God. *Reasoning*

from the Scriptures, pg. 417 **(JW)** **(PDF pg.416)**

"Referring to the Word (who became **Jesus Christ) as 'a god**' is consistent with the use of that term in the rest of the Scriptures. For example, at Psalm 82:1-6 human judges in Israel were referred to as 'gods' (Hebrew, 'elo·him'; Greek, the·oi', at John 10:34) because they were representatives of Jehovah and were to speak his law." A19

Aid to Bible Understanding, pg. 920 **(JW)** **(PDF pg.920)**
"So, Thomas may have addressed Jesus as 'my God' in the sense of Jesus' being 'a god' though not the Almighty God, not 'the only true God,' to whom Thomas had often heard Jesus pray(John 17:1-3)." A20

Reasoning from the Scriptures, pg. 213 **(JW)** **(PDF pg.212)**
"Does Thomas' exclamation at John 20:28 prove that Jesus is truly God? John 20:28 (RS) reads: "Thomas answered him, 'My Lord and my God!' There is no objection to referring to Jesus as 'God,' if this is what Thomas had in mind. Such would be in harmony with Jesus' own quotation from the Psalms in which powerful men, judges, were addressed as 'gods' (John 10:34, 35, RS; Psalm. 82:1-6). Of course, Christ occupies a position far higher than such men. Because of the uniqueness of his position in relation to Jehovah, at John 1:18 (NW) Jesus is referred to as 'the only-begotten god' (see also Ro, By). Isaiah 9:6 (RS) also prophetically describes Jesus as 'Mighty God,' but **not as the Almighty God**. All of this is in harmony with Jesus' being described as **'a god',** or 'divine' at John 1:1 (NW, AT)." A19

3. Jesus is Michael the Archa gel.

Reasoning from the Scriptures, 1985 pg. 218 **(JW)**(PDF pg. 217)
"Reasonably, then, the archangel Michael is Jesus Christ. (Interestingly, the expression 'archangel' is never found in the plural in the Scriptures, thus implying that there is only one.) . . . "So the evidence indicates that the Son of God was known as Michael before he came to earth and is known also by that name since his return to heaven where he resides as the glorified spirit Son of God." A19

Revelation Climax, 1988, page 180 **(JW)** **(PDF pg. 187)**
"Who accomplishes this great victory in Jehovah's name? The Bible says it is Michael and his angels. But who is Michael? The name 'Michael' means 'Who Is Like God?' So Michael must be interested in vindicating Jehovah's sovereignty by proving that no one is to be compared to Him. In Jude verse 9, he is called 'Michael the archangel.' Interestingly, the title 'archangel' is used elsewhere in the Bible with reference to only one person: Jesus Christ. "These and other scriptures lead us to the inescapable conclusion that Michael is no one else but the Lord Jesus Christ in his heavenly position." F

Aid to Bible Understanding, page 1152 **(JW)** **(PDF pg. 1152)**
"Scriptural evidence indicates that the name Michael applied to God's Son before he left heaven to become Jesus Christ and also after his return. Michael is the only one said to be 'archangel', meaning 'chief angel' or 'principle angel'." A20

JW index pg. 1, 2

4. Jesus should not be worshipped.
(check download page on website where the Watchtower used to teach the opposite)
Watch Tower 1880 (PDF pg. 321-322) *Watch Tower* 1892 (PDF pg. 297)
Watch Tower 1898 (PDF pg. 410) *Watch Tower* 1906 (PDF pg.31)

Aid to Bible Understanding, pg. 1242 **(JW)** **(PDF pg. 1242)**
"Obeisance to a human king is found in Jesus' illustration at Matthew 18:26. It is also evident that this was the kind of obeisance the astrologers rendered to the child Jesus " A20

If the rendering 'worship' is preferred, then it must be understood that such 'worship' is only a relative kind, for Jesus himself emphatically stated to Satan that 'it is Jehovah your God you must worship (form of pro-sky-ne'o) and it is to him alone you must render sacred service.'" A20

***Watch Tower* 1954** 5/15, pgs. 317-319 **(JW)** "Questions from Readers" **(PDF pg. 317)**
"In the January 1 issue of *The Watch Tower* the question from Ethiopia, **'Should we worship Jesus?'** is answered. In paragraph five Hebrews 1:6 is quoted with regard to the angels of God worshipping Jesus, but in the final paragraph it says: 'The answer to the above question must be that **no distinct worship is to be rendered to Jesus Christ** now glorified in heaven. Our worship is to go to Jehovah.'" F(Note the Watchtower used to teach that one should worship Jesus before 1954)

***Watch Tower* 1954** 1/1, pg. 30 **(JW)** "Questions from Readers" **(PDF pg. 30-31)**
"**Should we worship Jesus?** The clergy of Christendom that believe in a trinity as the main doctrine of Christianity will answer with a positive Yes to this question. Quite to be expected, for they believe that worshiping Jesus is at the same time worshiping God the Father and God the Holy Spirit, for these three they believe to be Three Persons mysteriously making up one God. The King James Version of the English Bible was rendered by trinitarian translators, and doubtless for this reason the translators rendered the Greek word proskyne'"o by the word 'worship', when applying to Jesus. In fact, in every case of its occurrence in the Christian Greek Scriptures they consistently rendered this Greek verb by 'worship'. So we read of the magi's 'worshiping' the babe Jesus, and of persons who approached Jesus or received healing from him or asked favors of him 'worshiping' Jesus on earth. "Consequently, since the Scriptures teach that Jesus Christ is not a trinitarian co-person with God the Father, but is a distinct person, the Son of God, the answer to the above question must be that no distinct worship is to be rendered to Jesus Christ now glorified in heaven. Our worship is to go to Jehovah God. However, we show the proper regard for God's only-begotten Son by rendering our worship to God through and in the name of Jesus Christ." F

I find it interesting that in my (Green Cover) copy of the *New World Translation*, Revised in 1970, Hebrews 1:5-6 reads as follows: **(JW)**
" For example, to which one of the angels did he ever say: 'You are my son; I, today, I have become your father'? And again: 'I myself shall become his father, and he himself will become my son'? But when he again brings his First-born into the inhabited earth, he says: 'And let all of God's angels **worship** him.'"

In the newer *New World Translation*, the word "worship" has been changed to "obeisance". The fact remains that the Watch Tower Society themselves have in the past translated this Greek word as "worship".

JW index **pg**. 1, 2

5. Jesus did not bodily rise from the dead.

Aid to Bible Understanding 1971, pg.1395 **(JW)** **(PDF pg. 1395)**
"Jesus appeared to his disciples on different occasions in various fleshly bodies, just as angels had appeared to men at ancient times. Like those angels, he had the power to construct and disintegrate those fleshly bodies at will, for the purpose of proving visibly that he had been resurrected."A20

Reasoning from the Scriptures 1985, pg.334 **(JW)** **(PDF pg. 333)**
"At his resurrection from the dead, Jesus was brought forth with a spirit body." ....."Why did not others see him too? Because he was a spirit creature and when, as the angels had done in the past, he materialized fleshly bodies to make himself visible, he did so only in the presence of his disciples." A19

Let God be True 1946, pg.122 **(JW)** **(PDF pg. 137)**
"So the King Christ Jesus was put to death in the flesh and was resurrected an invisible spirit creature." A21

Greatest Man 1991, pg. 116 **(JW)** **(PDF pg. 389)**
"Jesus will be a spirit creature that no human can see. But again Jesus promises his faithful apostles: "You will behold me, because I live and you will live." Yes, not only will Jesus appear to them in human form after his resurrection but in due time he will resurrect them to life with him in heaven as spirit creatures." F

JW index **pg**. 1, 2

CHRISTIAN REBUTTAL TO WATCH TOWER POINTS 1-5

1. Jesus is not a created being; He is the creator.

Colossians 1:15-18:"15) And He is the image of the invisible God, the first-born of all creation. For by Him all things were created, both in the heavens and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities-- all things have been created by Him and for Him. 17)And He is before all things, and in Him all things hold together. 18) He is also head of the body, the church; and He is the beginning, the first-born from the dead; so that He Himself might come to have first place in everything." (See also John 1:3, Hebrews 1:2, Isaiah 44:24.)

One can hardly look at this list of what Jesus created and not acknowledge that this includes angels. Jesus created angels. Think about that a minute. How can Jesus be the creator of ALL angels and yet still be an angel? Jesus did not create Himself. Keep in mind that only God the creator was involved with creation (Isaiah 44:24). The Watch Tower refers to the word "firstborn" in verse 15 and tells us that this means Jesus was created. Does "firstborn" mean created? Does "firstborn" always establish a literal birth-order in the Bible? The answer to both of these questions is "NO".

Vine's Expository Dictionary of Biblical Words
"FIRSTBORN
prototokos ^4416^, 'firstborn' (from protos, 'first,' and tikto, 'to beget'), is used of Christ as born of the Virgin Mary, <Luke 2:7>; further, in His relationship to the Father, expressing His priority to, and preeminence over, creation, not in the sense of being the 'first' to be born. It is used occasionally of superiority of position in the OT, see <Exod. 4:22; Deut. 21:16,17>," C4

This same Greek word is used in verse 18, where we are told that Jesus is "firstborn from the dead." If the word "firstborn" literally meant "created", then Jesus would be created from the dead in this passage. Even the Jehovah's Witnesses do not believe that. As the *Vine's Expository* dictionary shows, this means that Jesus is preeminent over all creation and he is also preeminent in the resurrection. The text tells us that this is "so that He Himself might come to have first place in everything."

2. Jesus is not just a god; He is God, and there is only one God.

In the next three references we see that God became a man.

John 1:1:"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God."

John 1:14: "And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth."

Philippians 2:5-8:"Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus, who, although He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant, and being made in the likeness of men. And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross."

Jesus' enemies understood His claim to be God.

John 10:30-33: "'I and the Father are one.' The Jews took up stones again to stone Him. Jesus answered them, 'I showed you many good works from the Father; for which of them are you stoning Me?' The Jews answered Him, 'For a good work we do not stone You, but for blasphemy; and because You, being a man, make Yourself out to be God.'"

Here is Jesus' response in verses 36-39 of that same chapter:

John 10:36-39:"do you say of Him, whom the Father sanctified and sent into the world, 'You are blaspheming,' because I said, 'I am the Son of God'? If I do not do the works of My Father, do not believe Me; but if I do them, though you do not believe Me, believe the works, that you may know and understand that the Father is in Me, and I in the Father.' Therefore they were seeking again to seize Him, and He eluded their grasp."

Jesus declared that He and the Father are one. The Jews understood this as a claim to be God. **Jesus then calls himself the "Son of God",** and then reaffirms His statement "I and the father are one". Did the Jews correctly understand what he meant? He called Himself the "Son of God", but did He also claim to be God? I believe the answer is "yes", He did claim to be God. This is shown clearly in John 20:28-29.

John 20:28-29: "Thomas answered and said to Him, **'My Lord and my God!'** Jesus said to him, 'Because you have seen Me, have you believed? Blessed are they who did not see, and yet believed.'"

Thomas called Jesus his "Lord and God". Jesus being the teacher that He was would have rebuked or at least corrected Thomas, if Thomas had been incorrect. Certainly Jesus would not let this error, this "using the Lord's name in vain" (as some have interpreted), go by without some correction. Jesus' answer to Thomas shows that Thomas was correct to call him his God and Lord.

How important is it to accept Jesus' claims of who He is? According to Jesus it is very important.

John 8:24-25: "I said therefore to you, that you shall die in your sins; for **unless you believe that I am** {*He*} **you shall die in your sins.** And so they were saying to Him, 'Who are You?' Jesus said to them, 'What have I been saying to you from the beginning?'"

The Bible calls Jesus God.

Isaiah 9:6: "For a child will be born to us, a son will be given to us; and the government will rest on His shoulders; and His name will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Eternal Father, Prince of Peace."

Acts 20:28: "Be on guard for yourselves and for all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood."(According to this verse the church was purchased with whose blood?)

Colossians 2:8-9: "See to it that no one takes you captive through philosophy and empty deception, according to the tradition of men, according to the elementary principles of the world, rather than according to Christ. For in Him all the fullness of Deity dwells in bodily form."

I John 5:20: "And we know that the Son of God has come, and has given us understanding, in order that we might know Him who is true, and we are in Him who is true, in His Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God and eternal life."

2 Peter 1:1: "Simon Peter, a bond-servant and apostle of Jesus Christ, to those who have received a faith of the same kind as ours, by the righteousness of our God and Savior, Jesus Christ…"

Hebrews 1:8: "But of the Son He says 'Thy throne, O God, is forever and ever, and the righteous scepter is the scepter of His kingdom.'"

Titus 2:13: "Looking for the blessed hope and the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Christ Jesus."

Does Jesus possess the attributes of God?

We would expect God to be seen as Creator, Judge, Savior (being able to forgive sins), omniscient (all knowing), omnipotent (all powerful), omnipresent (having the ability to be everywhere at once), eternal (having always existed), and worshipped. As I will show, all of these attributes can be found in Jesus Christ.

Jesus is Creator.
Colossians 1:13-16:"For He delivered us from the domain of darkness, and transferred us to the kingdom of His beloved Son, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins. And He is the image of the invisible God, the first-born of all creation. For by Him all things were created, both in the heavens and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities-- all things have been created by Him and for Him."
(See also John.1:3, Hebrews 1:8-10, 1 Corinthians 8:6, Isaiah 44:24.)

Jesus is Judge.
John 5:22: "For not even the Father judges anyone, but He has given all judgment to the Son."
(See also 2 Timothy 4:1, Romans 14:10.)

Jesus is Savior; He can forgive sins.
Mark 2:5:"And Jesus seeing their faith said to the paralytic, 'My son, your sins are forgiven.'"
(See also Mark 2:10, Colossians 2:13.)

We can forgive someone for sinning against us, but we cannot forgive someone for sinning against God, as Jesus did here.

Acts 5:30-31: "The God of our fathers raised up Jesus, whom you had put to death by hanging Him on a cross. He is the one whom God exalted to His right hand as a Prince and a Savior, to grant repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins."

Jesus is Omniscient (all knowing or all wise).
1 Corinthians 1:24: "to those who are the called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God."

Jesus is shown in the New Testament to have knowledge far beyond our human understanding. We do not know the heart of every man, but in John 2:24-25 it says that Jesus "knew all men" and what was "in man". In John 6:64, we are told that Jesus knew from the beginning who did not believe, and who it was that would betray Him. Then in John 13:1, we find that Jesus knew His hour had come to die and go to the Father. In John 16:30 the disciples said, "Now we know that You know all things" Again in John 18:4 it says that Jesus knew all the things that were about to happen to Him. While Jesus was on the cross we are told He knew the Old Testament prophecies concerning Himself and our redemption had been fulfilled.

Nobody else knew that at that time, yet, He did (John 19:28). Peter declared that Jesus knew his heart and all things (John 21:17). What man has ever had this kind of knowledge? This knowledge is far beyond that of even the prophets in the Bible. Prophets may have foretold future events, but none of them knew the heart and thoughts of every man

Jesus is Omnipotent (all powerful, unlimited authority).
Matthew 28:18:"And Jesus came up and spoke to them, saying, 'All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth.'"

In the following references we find that Jesus will return with power. Power flowed through Him to heal people who merely touched Him. Jesus had power over demons. He was able to give power to His disciples to heal others. Peter declared there was power in Jesus' name. Jesus is the power of God. It was through Jesus that Paul received power. Jesus has the power to subject everything unto Himself. It is by His power that we will be raised from the dead. He upholds all things by the word of His power. Jesus has the keys, i.e., the power over death and Hades. The time will come when Jesus will abolish all other rule, authority and power. (See Mark 13:26, 5:30; Luke 4:36, 6:19, 9:1; Acts 4:7-10; Romans 1:4; 1 Corinthians 1:24, 15:23-25; 2 Corinthians 12:9; Philippians 3:20-21; Hebrews 1:3; 2 Peter 1:16; and Revelation 1:17-18.)

Jesus is Omnipresent (present at all places at all times).
Matthew 18:20, 28:20: "Jesus said 'For where two or three have gathered together in My name, there I am in their midst.' He also told his disciples 'and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.' Paul declared that Jesus dwells in the hearts of believers. Paul further stated if this is not true of an individual they do not belong to him (Romans 8:9).
(See also 2 Corinthians 13:5, Galatians 2:20, Ephesians 3:17, Colossians 1:27, Revelation 3:20.)

Jesus is eternal (He has always existed).
Micah 5:2: "But as for you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, too little to be among the clans of Judah, from you One will go forth for me to be ruler in Israel. His goings forth are from long ago, from the days of eternity."
(See also John 1:1-2, 17:5, 8:58; and Revelation 1:17, 2:8, 22:13.)

Jesus is worshipped.
Hebrews 1:7 And when He again brings the firstborn into the world, He says, "AND LET ALL THE ANGELS OF GOD WORSHIP HIM." (See Also: John 9:38, Matthew 2:11, 14:33, 28:9. 28:17)

There is only one God.

Isaiah 43:10: " 'You are My witnesses,' declares the LORD, 'And My servant whom I have chosen, in order that you may know and believe me, and understand that I am He. Before me there was no God formed, and there will be none after me.'"

If Jesus is not Almighty God, as the Watch Tower would have us believe, then He cannot be a god in anything other than a title of respect because before Him there was no God formed, and there will be none after Him.

Isaiah 44:8: "Do not tremble and do not be afraid; have I not long since announced it to you and declared it? And you are My witnesses. Is there any God besides me, or is there any other Rock? I know of none."

If God is unaware of the existence of another God, then I would say that there is no other God. After reading the numerous references that show Jesus is God, how can we then come to the conclusion that He is not God? The context of all of the passages that are mentioned does not allow for the interpretation that Jesus only had a title of respect.

JW index **pg**. 1, 2

3. Jesus is not Michael the Archangel.

Hebrews 1:5-8: "5) For to which of the angels did He **ever** say, 'Thou art My Son, today I have begotten Thee'? And again, 'I will be a Father to Him And He shall be a Son to Me'? 6) And when He again brings the first-born into the world, He says, 'And let **all** the angels of God worship Him.' 7) And of the angels He says, 'Who makes His angels winds, and His ministers a flame of fire.' 8) But of the Son He says 'Thy throne, O God, is forever and ever, and the righteous scepter is the scepter of His kingdom.'"

This text makes a distinction between angels and Jesus. The question that is asked starts with "to which of his angels did He ever say." This is our indication that what follows was never said to an angel. Next we see that all of the angels were to worship Jesus. The text does not say "all of the **other** angels were to give **obeisance** to Jesus." Next we see a contrast between angels and Jesus. Verses 7 and 8 are in contrast to each other — "And of the angels He says". . . "But of the Son He says". . . "Thy throne, O God is forever." As this text shows a distinction between all angels and Jesus, then Jesus is not an angel. If Jesus is not an angel, then he is not Michael the Archangel.

JW index **pg**. 1, 2

4. Jesus is worshiped in the Bible.

Hebrews 1:6; "And when He again brings the first-born into the world, He says, 'And let all the angels of God worship Him.'"

Matthew 2:11: "And they came into the house and saw the Child with Mary His mother; and they fell down and worshiped Him; and opening their treasures they presented to Him gifts of gold and frankincense and myrrh." (See also Matthew 2:2 and 8.)

Matthew 14:33: "And those who were in the boat worshipped Him, saying, 'You are certainly God's Son!'"

Matthew 28:9:"And behold, Jesus met them and greeted them. And they came up and took hold of His feet and worshiped Him."

John 9:37-38:"Jesus said to him, 'You have both seen Him, and He is the one who is talking with you.' And he said, 'Lord, I believe.' And he worshiped Him."

Revelation 4:10:"…the twenty-four elders will fall down before Him who sits on the throne, and will worship Him who lives forever and ever, and will cast their crowns before the throne, saying…"(Revelation 7:17 shows the lamb is on the throne. John 1:29-36 shows Jesus is the lamb.)

Worship belongs only to God. Matthew 4:10:"Then Jesus said to him, 'Be gone, Satan! For it is written, 'You shall worship the Lord your God, and serve Him only.'"

JW index **pg**. 1, 2

5. Was Jesus resurrected bodily from the grave and is it important?

If Jesus did not rise from the dead, the Old Testament prophecy would not be fulfilled. Psalm 16:10:"For Thou wilt not abandon my soul to Sheol; neither wilt Thou allow Thy Holy One to undergo decay."

Next we will see the fulfillment of this prophecy in the New Testament.
Acts 13:33-37: "God has fulfilled this promise to our children in that He raised up Jesus, as it is also written in the second Psalm, 'Thou art My Son; today I have begotten Thee.' And as for the fact that He raised Him up from the dead, no more to return to decay, He has spoken in this way: 'I will give you the holy and sure blessings of David.' Therefore He also says in another Psalm, 'Thou wilt not allow Thy Holy One to undergo decay.' "For David, after he had served the purpose of God in his own generation, fell asleep, and was laid among his fathers, and underwent decay; but He whom God raised did not undergo decay." (The Apostle Paul is the one speaking in the passage above. Peter refers to this Psalm in the same way in Acts 2:27-32.)

If Jesus did not rise from the dead we would have no forgiveness of our sins. The next thing we read in verse 38 of this same passage (Acts 13) is: "Therefore let it be known to you, brethren, that through Him forgiveness of sins is proclaimed to you. "Note the use of the word **"Therefore"**; Paul is saying that *because* Jesus rose from the dead, we have forgiveness of sins! This is also confirmed in the next passage.

1 Corinthians 15:14-17: "if Christ has not been raised, then our preaching is vain, your faith also is vain. Moreover we are even found to be false witnesses of God, because we witnessed against God that He raised Christ, whom He did not raise, if in fact the dead are not raised. For if the dead are not raised, not even Christ has been raised; and **if Christ has not been raised, your faith is worthless; you are still in your sins.**"

When the Jews asked for a sign Jesus predicted He would rise from the dead.
If Jesus did not rise from the dead He would be a false prophet.
John 2:18-22: "The Jews therefore answered and said to Him, 'What sign do You show to us, seeing that You do these things?' Jesus answered and said to them, 'Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up.' The Jews therefore said, 'It took forty-six years to build this temple, and will You raise it up in three days?' But He was speaking of the temple of His body. When therefore He was raised from the dead, His disciples remembered that He said this; and they believed the Scripture, and the word which Jesus had spoken."

The Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society claimed that Jesus "materialized fleshly bodies to make himself visible, he did so only in the presence of his disciples."Furthermore they stated that "Jesus was put to death in the flesh and was resurrected an invisible spirit creature." These statements are not Biblical. The Bible teaches that Jesus Christ arose in the same exact body of flesh and bones in which He had lived and died. It is this same body in which He ascended into heaven. This is not only what the Bible teaches; it is also the historical teaching of the church.

We will address the quotes from the Watch Tower Society as follows:

Jesus did not appear "only in the presence of his disciples." He appeared also to unbelievers.

Paul was a hostile unbeliever before Jesus appeared to him. This can be seen in Acts 9:1-30. He is called Saul in Acts 9, but we learn in Acts 13:9 and Acts 22:1-21 that "Saul" is indeed the same person who comes to be known as the "Apostle Paul". This is after the 40-day period during which Jesus appeared to the disciples. In John 7:5 we are told that not even the brothers of Jesus were believing in Him. James and Jude were sons of Mary and Joseph, and were half-brothers of Jesus, since they had the same mother. Later both become believers. Although it cannot be shown exactly when they became believers, it seems likely that it was after the resurrection. We have no reference to them being believers until after His resurrection. We see in 1 Corinthians 15:7 that Jesus appeared to James after He arose from the dead. References that show James and Jude were the brothers of Jesus includeJude1:1 and Mark 6:3. (*Strong's* entry #2455 reveals that in the Greek language, "Jude" was a form of the name "Judas".)

The Bible teaches that Jesus rose from the dead in the same physical body in which He died.

John 2:18-22: "The Jews therefore answered and said to Him, 'What sign do You show to us, seeing that You do these things?' Jesus answered and said to them, 'Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up.' The Jews therefore said, 'It took forty-six years to build this temple, and will You raise it up in three days?' But He was speaking of the temple of His body. When therefore He was raised from the dead, His disciples remembered that He said this; and they believed the Scripture, and the word which Jesus had spoken."

When Jesus made this statement He had a physical body of flesh and bones. This is the temple or body that He said He would raise in three days. Since Jesus said He would raise this physical body, reason and logic tells us it was a physical body, not a spiritual body that was to be resurrected. We have already seen in Psalm 16:10, Acts 2:27-32 and 13:34-38 that this body would never undergo decay. What is the purpose of preserving the body if it is not to be raised from the dead and used? Some Jehovah's Witnesses have told me that Jesus' body did not decay, but God destroyed it with gases. It's interesting to me that these same Jehovah's Witnesses could offer no Biblical reference for such a view. Jesus took great pains to show that it was He himself who rose from the dead, and not a spirit. Let us consider the following Scripture.

Luke 24:39-43:" 'See My hands and My feet, that it is I Myself; touch Me and see, for a spirit does not have flesh and bones as you see that I have.' And when He had said this, He showed them His hands and His feet. And while they still could not believe it for joy and were marveling, He said to them, 'Have you anything here to eat?' And they gave Him a piece of a broiled fish; and He took it and ate it before them."

Everything Jesus offered them for evidence of His resurrection was of the physical nature. He spoke to them to them so they could hear and recognize His voice. Jesus showed His wounds from the crucifixion, inviting them to touch Him. In John 20:27, Jesus told Thomas to put his finger into the wounds in His hands, and to put his hand into His side. Jesus purposely asked them for something to eat and ate fish in front of them. **Jesus declared that a spirit did not have a body of flesh and bones as He had.** He did things like this on several occasions, over a period of 40 days. They watched Him bodily ascend into heaven (Acts 1:9). Jesus never said anything to them that would indicate that these "convincing proofs", as we are told in Acts 1:3, should be interpreted as a spiritual body. If this was merely one of several fleshly materialized bodies to make Himself visible, as the Watch Tower claims, then Jesus purposely deceived His disciples. The moral implications of this are absolutely contrary to the Jesus we read of in the Bible.

JW index **pg**. 1, 2

A DIFFERENT HOLY SPIRIT

We will start with quotes from the Watchtower and then later contrast with a biblical perspective.

Knowledge 1995 pg. 31 **(JW)** **(PDF pg. 32)**
"God's holy spirit is not a person. It is Jehovah's active force, used by the Almighty to accomplish his purposes." A22

The Watch Tower 6-1-**1988** pgs. 14-15 **(JW)** **(PDF pg. 334)**
"Holy Spirit-A Person or an Active Force?"

"What about the supposed third person of the Trinity, the holy spirit, said to be equal in power, substance, and eternity to Father and Son? Nowhere in the Bible is the holy spirit mentioned with God and Christ as being equal to them. For instance, on the occasion of Jesus' baptism, Mark 1:10 shows that the holy spirit came down upon Jesus 'like a dove,' not in a human form. The holy spirit was not some person coming upon Jesus but was God's active force. That power from God enabled Jesus to heal the sick and resurrect the dead. As Luke 5:17 says in the Diaglott: 'The Mighty Power of the Lord [God] was on him [Jesus] to cure.' Later, at Pentecost, the apostles also were given the power from God to heal the sick and raise the dead. Did that make them part of some 'godhead'? No, they were simply given power from God, through Christ, to do what humans ordinarily could not do.

That same active force is mentioned in Ephesians 5:18, where Paul counsels: 'Keep getting filled with spirit.' Similarly, Acts 7:55 says that Stephen was 'full of holy spirit.' And at Pentecost, the followers of Jesus 'all became filled with holy spirit' (Acts 2:4).Can a human get filled with another person? No, but he can get filled with the power that comes from God. That holy spirit is the same force that God used to create the universe. As Genesis 1:2 says: 'God's active force was moving to and fro over the surface of the waters.'

After Jesus was resurrected, Stephen had a vision of heaven and 'caught sight of God's glory and of Jesus standing at God's right hand' (Acts 7:55). Thus, two separate persons were in evidence in heaven: (1) God and (2) the resurrected Jesus Christ. No holy spirit is mentioned in this vision because it was not any third person of a Trinity. The holy spirit, being God's active force, would proceed from God but not as a separate being. That is why Stephen saw only two persons, not three. (End Quote)

Reasoning from the Scriptures, 1985, 1989 pgs. 136-137**(JW)**(PDF pg. 135-136)
"Jehovah is the only true God. Jesus Christ is not part of a Trinitarian godhead but is the only-begotten Son of God. Redemption from sin is possible only through faith in Christ's ransom sacrifice. The holy spirit is not a person but is Jehovah's active force, and its fruitage must be evident in the lives of true worshipers. The human soul is not immortal, as the ancient pagans claimed; it dies, and the hope for future life is in the resurrection. God's permission of wickedness has been because of the issue of universal sovereignty. God's Kingdom is the only hope for mankind. Since 1914 we have been living in the last days of the global wicked system of things. Only 144,000 faithful Christians will be kings and priests with Christ in heaven, whereas the rest of obedient mankind will receive eternal life on a paradise earth." A19

These Watch Tower statements show us that Jehovah's Witnesses believe the following:
The Holy Spirit is not a person.
The Bible does not say that Jesus or the Holy Spirit is equal to Jehovah.
The Holy Spirit came in the form of a dove, not a person.
The Holy Spirit is the power that was given to Jesus to perform miracles.
A person cannot be filled with another person; therefore the Holy Spirit is not a person.
Stephen only saw two people, not three.

JW index **pg**. 1, 2

Let us now examine these six beliefs from a Christian perspective.

The Personhood of the Holy Spirit (numbers 1 and 3)

Let's look first at the definition of a person.

Webster's Collegiate Dictionary Tenth Edition
"per.son n [ME, fr. OF persone, fr. L persona actor's mask, character in a play, person, prob. fr. Etruscan phersu mask, fr. Gk prosopa, pl. of prosopon face, mask--more at prosopopoeia] (13c)
human, individual--sometimes used in combination esp. by those who prefer to avoid man in compounds applicable to both sexes <chairperson><spokesperson> 2: a character or part in or as if in a play: guise 3 a**: one of the three modes of being in the Trinitarian Godhead as understood by Christians** b: the unitary personality of Christ that unites the divine and human natures 4 a archaic: bodily appearance b: the body of a human being; also: the body and clothing <unlawful search of the ~> 5: **the personality of a human being: self.**"[A13]

The Holy Spirit is a person in the sense that he has the personality of a person. A force such as the one the Watch Tower describes as the Holy Spirit does not have a personality. Electricity is an active force, but it does not have a personality. Because the Holy Spirit is called a spirit, does that mean he is not a person? Jesus said that the Father is spirit (John 4:24) and in Luke 24:39 Jesus said that a spirit does not have a body of flesh and bones. If God the Father does not have a body of flesh and bones then He is not literally in human form. Does that mean that Jehovah is not a person, because He is not in a human form? No, of course not! Yet this is the argument the Watch Tower used when saying, *"on the occasion of Jesus' baptism, Mark 1:10 shows that the **holy spirit came down upon Jesus 'like a dove,' not in a human form***." Taking on the form of a dove does not rule out the personhood of the Holy Spirit.

There is no verse in the Bible that directly states that the Holy Spirit is a person; however, there are passages that give the Holy Spirit attributes that are normally only applied to a person (and not to a "force", or "power"):
The Holy Spirit is referred to as "He" and "Him" (John 14:16-17).
The Holy Spirit is referred to as "He", and he teaches (John 14:26, 1 John 2:27).
The Holy Spirit is referred to as "He", and convicts the world of sin (John 16:7-8).
The Holy Spirit speaks (Acts 4:8, 8:29, 10:19, 13:2; Hebrews 3:7).
The Holy Spirit intercedes (Romans 8:26).
The Holy Spirit leads and directs (Galatians 5:18, Acts 16:6).
The Holy Spirit appoints men to service (Acts 13:2, Acts 20:28).
The Holy Spirit bears witness of Jesus (John 15:26).
The Holy Spirit can be grieved (Ephesians 4:30).
The Holy Spirit is called "God", and he can be lied to (Acts 5:3-4).
The Holy Spirit can be insulted and blasphemed (Hebrews 10:29, Matthew 12:31).

These types of references are only applied to a *person* with a *personality*. These are not references that one would use for a force or power. One would not say that electricity spoke, or interceded. One cannot lie to or grieve electricity, yet it is a force. The Holy Spirit is not an active force; rather He is a person.

The Holy Spirit is called "God" and possesses the attributes of God (number 2).

If the Holy Spirit is to be considered equal to God then we would expect to find within the Holy Spirit something of like quality or nature to God. Let's examine some of the attributes that only God possesses; such as being referred to as "God", being eternal, being omnipotent, being omniscient, being omnipresent, and being involved in creation and in our salvation and worship.

The Holy Spirit is referred to "God".
Acts 5:3-4:"But Peter said, 'Ananias, why has Satan filled your heart to lie to the **Holy Spirit**, and to keep back some of the price of the land? While it remained unsold, did it not remain your own? And after it was sold, was it not under your control? Why is it that you have conceived this deed in your heart? You have not lied to men, but to God.'"

Judgment: Ananias and Sapphira were killed for lying to the Holy Spirit. Considering this, one could certainly say that the Holy Spirit is in some way involved with judgment.

The Holy Spirit is Eternal.
Hebrews 9:14:"how much more will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without blemish to God, cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?"

The Holy Spirit is Omnipotent.
Luke 1:35:"And the angel answered and said to her, 'The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; and for that reason the holy offspring shall be called the Son of God.'"

The Holy Spirit is Omniscient.
1 Corinthians 2:10-11:"For to us God revealed them through the Spirit; for the Spirit searches all things, even the depths of God. For who among men knows the thoughts of a man except the spirit of the man, which is in him? Even so the thoughts of God no one knows except the Spirit of God."

The Holy Spirit is Omnipresent.
Psalm 139:7-10:"Where can I go from Thy Spirit? Or where can I flee from Thy presence? If I ascend to heaven, Thou art there; if I make my bed in Sheol, behold, Thou art there. If I take the wings of the dawn, if I dwell in the remotest part of the sea, Even there Thy hand will lead me, and Thy right hand will lay hold of me."

The Holy Spirit is involved in our salvation.
Titus 3:5:"He saved us, not on the basis of deeds which we have done in righteousness, but according to His mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewing by the Holy Spirit."

The Holy Spirit in creation.
Psalm 104:30:"Thou dost send forth Thy Spirit, they are created; and Thou dost renew the face of the ground."

Genesis 1:2:"And the earth was formless and void, and darkness was over the surface of the deep; and the Spirit of God was moving over the surface of the waters."

Job 26:13:"By his spirit he hath garnished the heavens; his hand hath formed the crooked serpent." (KJV)

The Watch Tower declares that the Holy Spirit "is the same force that God used to create the universe", yet still maintains that Jehovah created Jesus, and then through Jesus created everything else. *By their own words* all three members of the Godhead are involved in creation, but Isaiah44:24 says that God "made all things" by Himself. God can truthfully say this only because these three persons make only one God.

The Holy Spirit involved in our worship.
Philippians 3:3:"for we are the true circumcision, who worship in the Spirit of God and glory in Christ Jesus and put no confidence in the flesh"

The Holy Spirit is not just the power that was given to Jesus to perform miracles (number 4).

The Watch Tower said, "The holy spirit was not some person coming upon Jesus but was God's active force. That power from God enabled Jesus to heal the sick and resurrect the dead." This statement really limits the power of Jesus. As we can see in the verse below, Jesus was more than the instrument through which this power was channeled; He is himself the power. Again this is true because the three persons make only one God.

1 Corinthians 1:24:"but to those who are the called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God."

The Holy Spirit can fill a person and still be a person (number 5).
In our earlier quotes the Watch Tower said, *"Can a human get filled with another person? No, but he can get filled with the power that comes from God."* Does this argument show that the Holy Spirit is not a person? No, it does not. Our body is a temple of God (1 Corinthians 3:16). Does this mean that God is not a person? No, of course not. Paul said Christ lived in him (Galatians 2:20). Does this mean that Christ is not a person? Again, the answer is "No";Watch Tower's example does not line up with other Scripture.

Stephen only saw two people, not three (number 6).

The Watch Tower's argument is this:*"Stephen had a vision of heaven and 'caught sight of God's glory and of Jesus standing at God's right hand.' (Acts 7:55) Thus, two separate persons were in evidence in heaven: (1) God and (2) the resurrected Jesus Christ. No holy spirit is mentioned in this vision because it was not any third person of a Trinity."*

This is simply a matter of reason and logic. Does failure to mention one member of the Godhead, in one particular passage, prove that there is no third member? Of course not. All three members are mentioned together at the birth of Christ (Matthew 1:18-23), and at His baptism (Matthew 3:16-17). Even if all three were not mentioned together (at the same time), this would not change the fact that all three are called "God", and we are told there is only one God.

A DIFFERENT GOSPEL

Is the Gospel message important? Consider what the Apostle Paul said in the following passage: Galatians 1:8: "But even though we, or an angel from heaven, should preach to you a gospel contrary to that which we have preached to you, let him be accursed."

Following is *Thayer's* definition of the Greek word translated as "gospel" in this passage. "2097 euaggelizo- to bring good news, to announce glad tidings used in the Old Testament of any kind of good news, of the joyful tidings of God's kindness, in particular, of the Messianic blessings in the New Testament used especially of the glad tidings of the coming kingdom of God, and of the salvation to be obtained in it through Christ, and of what relates to this salvation glad tidings are brought to one, one has glad tidings proclaimed to him to proclaim glad tidings, to instruct (people) concerning the things that pertain to salvation."[C6]

As you have just seen, the Gospel message was very important to the Apostle Paul. The Gospel is the good news of salvation found in Jesus Christ. The question we will discuss in this chapter is, does The Watch Tower agree with the Bible's view of how salvation is obtained? I have read several Watch Tower articles that sound like works are merely the fruit of genuine faith, and not a means of salvation. To this I would agree; however Watch Tower is not always consistent with this viewpoint:

Watch Tower, Feb.15,**1983**, pgs. 12-13 **(JW)**(PDF pg. 108-109)
"You Can Live Forever in Paradise on Earth — But How?"
"LIVING forever on earth is just an impossible dream. There is no way anybody can do it.' You may have heard people say that. Yet you may know that in the beginning it was God's purpose for obedient humans to live forever in an earthly Paradise. And God never fails to accomplish what he purposes (Genesis 1:28; Isaiah 55:11)! His Word plainly promises: 'The righteous themselves will possess the earth, and they will reside forever upon it" (Psalm 37:29).

"That is the thrilling message that Jehovah's Witnesses bring to people when they call at their homes. The Kingdom, with Jesus Christ as Ruler, will see to it that God's original purpose is accomplished. Under the Kingdom's righteous administration this earth will be cultivated to become a beautiful Paradise. However, not everyone will be permitted to live in the Paradise earth. Requirements must be met. That is reasonable (Matthew 6:10). Consider: If you were the owner of a beautiful home surrounded by well-kept gardens, would you allow just anyone to live there? No, he would have to meet with your approval, meeting your requirements. What does God require of those who will reside forever upon his Paradise earth? Let us examine four basic requirements.

"Four Requirements
"Jesus Christ identified a first requirement when he said in prayer to his Father: 'This means everlasting life, their taking in knowledge of you, the only true God, and of the one whom you sent forth, Jesus Christ' (John 17:3).Knowledge of God and of Jesus Christ includes knowledge of God's purposes regarding the earth and of Christ's role as earth's new King. Will you take in such knowledge by studying the Bible?

"Many have found the second requirement more difficult. It is to obey God's laws, yes, to conform one's life to the moral requirements set out in the Bible. This includes refraining from a debauched, immoral way of life (1 Corinthians 6:9, 10; 1 Peter 4:3, 4).

"A third requirement is that we be associated with God's channel, his organization. God has always used an organization. For example, only those in the ark in Noah's day survived the Flood, and only those associated with the Christian congregation in the first century had God's favor (Acts 4:12). Similarly, Jehovah is using only one organization today to accomplish his will. To receive everlasting life in the earthly Paradise we must identify that organization and serve God as part of it.

"The fourth requirement is connected with loyalty. God requires that prospective subjects of his Kingdom support his government by loyally advocating his Kingdom rule to others. Jesus Christ explained: 'This good news of the kingdom will be preached in all the inhabited earth' (Matthew 24:14).Will you meet this requirement by telling others about God's Kingdom?" [F]

JW index **pg**. 1, 2

Christian rebuttal to the Watchtower's 4 requirements

Although the Biblical view of heaven and The Watch Tower view of "Paradise Earth", as well as who will go there, are different, that is not the area we will focus on right now. The question we want to answer is, "How is salvation obtained?"
According to the Watch Tower there are four requirements that must be met.

Knowledge of God and of Jesus Christ includes knowledge of God's purposes regarding the earth and of Christ's role as earth's new King.

We must obey God's laws.

We must be associated with God's channel, His organization. (The strong implication here, of course, is that Watch Tower is this organization.)

We must tell others about God's Kingdom.

Does the Bible teach these same four requirements?
Knowledge of God and of Jesus Christ.
Indeed, the Bible tells us "there is salvation in no one else; for there is no other name under heaven that has been given among men, by which we must be saved" (Acts 4:12). However, God does not expect everyone to be a theologian in order to be saved. Salvation does not include "knowledge of God's purposes regarding the earth and of Christ's role as earth's new King".

Jesus told the thief on the cross, "Truly I say to you, today you shall be with Me in Paradise" (Luke 23:43). The thief on the cross knew only to put his trust in Jesus, and that was enough.

We must obey God's laws.
To obey God's commandments is important. Jesus said, "If you love Me, you will keep My commandments"(John 14:15). But we are not saved on the basis of this obedience to His commandments; rather we are saved by his grace alone.

Ephesians 2:8-10:"For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; not as a result of works, that no one should boast. For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them."

We are to do good works, but we are *saved by grace*. This is a "gift". One cannot earn a gift, but rather it is given freely.

Romans 21-24: "But now apart from the Law the righteousness of God has been manifested, being witnessed by the Law and the Prophets, even the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all those who believe; for there is no distinction; for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, being justified as a gift by His grace through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus"

We are ALL sinners and are justified as a gift, by His grace. If we could keep the law we would be sinless. The Bible tells us that we are not sinless.

I John 1:8:"If we say that we have no sin, we are deceiving ourselves, and the truth is not in us."

We must be associated with God's channel.
God never indicated that we need to belong to any organization. We do need to be associated with Jesus. "Jesus said to him, *'I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father, but through Me"* (John 14:6). "*And there is salvation in no one else; for there is no other name under heaven that has been given among men, by which we must be saved"* (Acts 4:12).

We must tell others about God's kingdom.
Telling others about God's kingdom is also important. *"For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek"* (Romans 1:16). As we have already shown, we are not saved by any work; this includes sharing the Gospel with others. Is it important? Yes! Does it have anything to do with our salvation? NO!

JW index **pg**. 1, 2

You may also want to read: Grace verses Works

IS IT WRONG TO STUDY OR THINK FOR YOURSELF?

As strange as it sounds, the Watch Tower has strongly discouraged people from studying the Bible on their own or thinking for themselves. This teaching is in contrast to what the Bible teaches. In the Bible we are told to study the Scriptures for ourselves. We are also told that the Holy Spirit can teach us, even without the aid of a human teacher.

We are warned of false teachers. How can you recognize what is a falsehood unless you study the truth? Read these Bible verses: 2 Timothy 2:15, Ezra 7:10, John 14:6, 1John 2:27, Acts 17:11, 1 John 4:1-3, 2 Peter 2:1, Galatians 1:7-8, Romans 16:17, 2 Corinthians 11:13-15; after you have read this Scripture, compare its teachings to the Watch Tower teachings below.

***Watch Tower*,** Feb.15, **1981**, pg.19 **(JW)** **(PDF pg. 115)**
"We all need help to understand the Bible, and we cannot find the Scriptural guidance we need outside the 'faithful and discreet slave' organization." F

Watch Tower, August 15, **1981**, pgs.28-29 **(JW)**(PDF pg. 508-509)
From time to time, there have arisen from among the ranks of Jehovah's people those who, like the original Satan, have adopted an independent, faultfinding attitude .....They say that it is sufficient to read the Bible exclusively, either alone or in small groups at home. But, strangely, through such 'Bible reading,' they have reverted right back to the apostate doctrines that commentaries by Christendom's clergy were teaching 100 years ago" F

The most interesting implication of this statement is the assumption that those who read the Bible, alone or in small groups, will "revert back" to Christian doctrine, rejecting doctrines they were taught as Jehovah's Witnesses. I would think that should tell them something.

Watch Tower, October 1, **1967**, pg.587 **(JW)** **(PDF pg. 587)**
"Thus the Bible is an organizational book and belongs to the Christian congregation as an organization, **not to individuals,** regardless of how sincerely they may believe that they can interpret the Bible." F

Watch Tower, October 1, **1967**, pg. 591 **(JW)** **(PDF pg. 591)**
"Make haste to identify the visible theocratic organization of God that represents his king, Jesus Christ. It is essential for life. Doing so, be complete in accepting its every aspect. We cannot claim to love God, yet deny his Word and channel of communication." F

Watch Tower, May 1, **1957**, p. 274 **(JW)** **(PDF pg. 274)**
"It is through his organization that God provides this light that the proverb says is the teaching or law of the mother. If we are to walk in the light of truth we must recognize not only Jehovah God as our Father but his organization as our mother." F

Watch Tower, February 1, **1952**, pgs. 78-79 **(JW)**[(PDF pg. 78-79)]
"Down to this day the legal corporation, the Watch Tower Bible & Tract Society, has been used as an agency to publish for and direct and unify the preaching activities of the society of witnesses overspreading the earth. When Christ came for judgment in 1918 he found some associated with this group that thought the Lord had delayed his coming and they were oppressing their fellow slaves in Christ. These were cast off as the 'evil slave' class. Those faithfully serving God were identified as the 'faithful and discreet slave' class.

"What is the Master's decision regarding the discreet slave? 'Truly I say to you that he will appoint him over all his belongings.' Before this promotion the slave is over only the Lord's domestics or body of attendants, to give them their spiritual food at the proper time…"

(pg. 79) "…Are we assigned as individuals to bring forth the food for the spiritual table? No? Then let us not try to take over the slave's duties. We should eat and digest and assimilate what is set before us, without shying away from parts of the food because it may not suit the fancy of our mental taste." [F]

Watch Tower, July 1, **1973**, pg. 402 **(JW)** **(PDF pg. 402)**
"Consider, too, the fact that Jehovah's organization alone, in all the earth, is directed by God's holy spirit or active force. (Zech. 4:6) Only this organization functions for Jehovah's purpose and to his praise. To it alone God's Sacred Word, the Bible, is not a sealed book."[F]

WATCHTOWER LITERATURE: IS IT TRUSTWORTHY?

The *Watch Tower* claims to be a prophet of God. The *Watch Tower* claims that we must belong to the Jehovah's Witness organization to be qualified to live on Paradise Earth. The *Watch Tower* informs us that we cannot read the Bible alone, but we also need their literature to help us to have true understanding. Considering these claims, one would certainly expect to find their publications to be extremely accurate — if there is any validity in their claims at all.

In this section I will question that validity by focusing on just two of the Watchtower publications.
Should You Believe in the Trinity, 1989
The New Worlds Translation of the Holy Scriptures

***Should You Believe in the Trinity*?** 1989, pg. 7 **(JW)** **(PDF pg.7)**

"THE ante-Nicene Fathers were acknowledged to have been leading religious teachers in the early centuries after Christ's birth. What they taught is of interest.

"Justin Martyr, who died about 165 C.E., called the prehuman Jesus a created angel who is 'other than the God who made all things.' He said that Jesus was inferior to God and 'never did anything except what the Creator . . . willed him to do and say.'

"Irenaeus, who died about 200 C.E., said that the prehuman Jesus had a separate existence from God and was inferior to him. He showed that Jesus is not equal to the 'One true and only God,' who is 'supreme over all, and besides whom there is no other.'

"Clement of Alexandria, who died about 215 C.E., called Jesus in his prehuman existence 'a creature' but called God 'the uncreated and imperishable and only true God.' He said that the Son 'is next to the only omnipotent Father' but not equal to him.

"Tertullian, who died about 230 C.E., taught the supremacy of God. He observed: 'The Father is different from the Son (another), as he is greater; as he who begets is different from him who is begotten; he who sends, different from him who is sent.' He also said: 'There was a time when the Son was not Before all things, God was alone.'

"Hippolytus, who died about 235 C.E., said that God is 'the one God, the first and the only One, the Maker and Lord of all,' who 'had nothing co-equal [of equal age] with him But he was One, alone by himself; who, willing it, called into being what had no being before,' such as the created prehuman Jesus.

"Origen, who died about 250 C.E., said that 'the Father and Son are two substances ..... two things as to their essence,' and that 'compared with the Father, [the Son] is a very small light.'

Summing up the historical evidence, Alvan Lamson says in The Church of the First Three Centuries: 'The modern popular doctrine of the Trinity . . . derives no support from the language of Justin [Martyr]: and this observation may be extended to all the ante-Nicene Fathers; that is, to all Christian writers for three centuries after the birth of Christ. It is true, they speak of the Father, Son, and . . . holy Spirit, but not as co-equal, not as one numerical essence, not as Three in One, in any sense now admitted by Trinitarians. The very reverse is the fact.' Thus, the testimony of the Bible and of history makes clear that the Trinity was unknown throughout Biblical times and for several centuries thereafter."[F]

JW index **pg**. 1, 2

Christian Response to the Watchtower pamphlet

Reading the last paragraph of this passage, a person is led to believe that no Christian writer in the first three centuries taught or believed the doctrine that is now known as the Trinity. But, it is easy to show that the doctrine known as the Trinity was taught and believed well before the 4th century. To do this we will simply quote someone who lived before that time period. I would like to share two quotes from the Early Church Fathers before the 3rd century.

Ignatius was said to be a pupil of the Apostle John; he lived 90 A.D.
Ante-Nicene Fathers: Volume I, The Epistle of Ignatius to the Philippians, Chapter 2 "Wherefore also the Lord, when He sent forth the apostles to make disciples of all nations, commanded them to 'baptize in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost,'
not unto one [person] having three names, nor into three [persons] who became incarnate, but into three possessed of equal honour." D1 (PDF pg. 98)

This clearly shows that the early church in the 1st Century taught and believed the same doctrine that we call the Trinity today.

Tertullian was a Christian theologian who lived 155-220 A.D. The following quote by him can be found in Roberts, Alexander and Donaldson, James, *Ante-Nicene Fathers: Volume III, Tertullian Against Praxeas*, Chapter25. **(PDF pg. 1133-1134)**

"What follows Philip's question, and the Lord's whole treatment of it, to the end of John's Gospel, continues to furnish us with statements of the same kind, distinguishing the Father and the Son, with the properties of each. Then there is the Paraclete or Comforter, also, which He promises to pray for to the Father, and to send from heaven after He had ascended to the Father. He is called 'another comforter', indeed, but in what way He is another we have already shown. 'He shall receive of mine,' says Christ, just as Christ Himself received of the Father's. **Thus the connection of the Father in the Son, and of the Son in the Paraclete, produces three coherent Persons, who are yet distinct One from Another. These Three are one essence**, not one Person, as it is said, 'I and my Father are One', in respect of unity of substance not singularity of number."[D1]

The following definition of **"Paraclete"** is by *Webster's Collegiate Dictionary 10th Edition*. "*Par.a.clete n [ME Paraclyte, fr. LL Paracletus, Paraclitus, fr. Gk Parakletos, lit., advocate, intercessor, fr. parakalein to invoke, fr. para- + kalein to call--more at low] (15c):* ***holy spirit***"
A13

Here Tertullian is referring to John 14: 9-16, where Jesus said He would ask of the Father, and He would send the Holy Spirit (also referred to as "another Comforter" in the King James version of the Bible). We see in this text that Tertullian referred to the Paraclete as the Holy Spirit. Notice he stated that the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit were three persons that were distinct from one another. He further stated that these three persons were one in essence. Tertullian just defined the Trinity; remember he lived 155-220 AD.

Compare what Tertullian said to the following from *Nelson's Illustrated Bible Dictionary.* "TRININTY — the coexistence of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit in the unity of the Godhead (divine nature or essence). The doctrine of the trinity means that within the being and activity of the one God there are three distinct persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit."C2
Page Index

The Ante-Nicene Fathers mentioned in this Watch Tower publication did not teach or believe what the Watch Tower stated. I have the writings of the Ante-Nicene Fathers on CD-ROM, and an application that has the capability of searching for words or phrases. I used this application to search for the quotes attributed in this Watch Tower publication. I did not find any of the quotes the Watch Tower mentioned. I did have two hits when I got to "Tertullian"; however, in both cases the text did not say what the Watch Tower claimed Tertullian said. My next course of action was to search for what Justin Martyr, Irenaeus, Clement of Alexandria, Tertullian, Hippolytus, and Origen *did* teach regarding the Trinity, or the deity of Jesus Christ. Following is a quote from each of these early Christian writers.

Justin Martyr
The Ante-Nicene Fathers Volume 1(PDF pg.150)
The First Apology of Justin, Chapter LXIII
"And all the Jews even now teach that the nameless God spake to Moses; whence the Spirit of prophecy, accusing them by Isaiah the prophet mentioned above, said 'The ox knoweth his owner, and the ass his master's crib; but Israel doth not know Me, and My people do not understand'{Isaiah 1:3}. And Jesus the Christ, because the Jews knew not what the Father was, and what the Son, in like manner accused them; and Himself said, 'No one knoweth the Father, but the Son; nor the Son, but the Father, and they to whom the Son revealeth Him' {Matthew 11: 27}.**Now the Word of God is His Son**, as we have before said. And **He is called Angel and Apostle; for He declares whatever we ought to know, and is sent forth to declare whatever is revealed**; as our Lord Himself says, 'He that heareth Me, heareth Him that sent Me' {Luke 10:16}. From the writings of Moses also this will be manifest; for thus it is written in them, 'And **the Angel of God spake to Moses, in a flame of fire out of the bush, and said, "I am that I am, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, the God of Jacob, the God of thy fathers;** go down into Egypt, and bring forth My people"'{Exodus 3: 6}. And if you wish to learn what

follows, you can do so from the same writings; for it is impossible to relate the whole here. But so much is written for the sake of proving that Jesus the Christ is the Son of God and His Apostle, being of old the Word, and **appearing** sometimes in the form of fire, and **sometimes in the likeness of angels**; but now, by the will of God, having become man for the human race, He endured all the sufferings which the devils instigated the senseless Jews to inflict upon Him; who, though they have it expressly affirmed in the writings of Moses, 'And the angel of God spake to Moses in a flame of fire in a bush, and said, "I am that I am, the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob," yet maintain that He who said this was the Father and Creator of the universe. Whence also the Spirit of prophecy rebukes them, and says, 'Israel doth not know Me, my people have not understood Me' {Isaiah 1:3}. And again, Jesus, as we have already shown, while He was with them, said, 'No one knoweth the Father, but the Son; nor the Son but the Father, and those to whom the Son will reveal Him'{Matthew 11:27}. The Jews, accordingly, being throughout of opinion that it was the Father of the universe who spake to Moses, though He who spake to him was indeed the Son of God, who is called both Angel and Apostle, are justly charged, both by the Spirit of prophecy and by Christ Himself, with knowing neither the Father nor the Son. For they who affirm that the Son is the Father, are proved neither to have become acquainted with the Father, nor to know that **the Father of the universe has a Son; who also, being the first-begotten Word of God, is even God. And of old He appeared in the shape of fire and in the likeness of an angel to Moses and to the other prophets;** but now in the times of your reign [rather, 'of your empire'], having, as we before said, become Man by a virgin, according to the counsel of the Father, for the salvation of those who believe on Him, He endured both to be set at nought and to suffer, that by dying and rising again He might conquer death. And that which was said out of the bush to Moses, 'I am that I am, the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, and the God of your fathers'. This signified that they, even though dead, are let in existence, and are men belonging to Christ Himself. For they were the first of all men to busy themselves in the search after God; Abraham being the father of Isaac, and Isaac of Jacob, as Moses wrote." *D1*

Justin did not say Jesus was *"a created angel";* he did say Jesus was "called both angel and apostle", and gave an explanation as to why Jesus was given this title. One of the definitions of "angel" in the *Webster's* dictionary is "a messenger of God". One who is "sent forth to declare whatever is revealed "as Justin stated, is a *messenger*. This is Justin's explanation as to why Jesus was given the title "Angel of God". Justin also said of Jesus that He was "appearing sometimes in the form of fire, and sometimes in the likeness of angels." This does not mean that Jesus is literally an angel anymore than it means that Jesus is literally a fire. Justin partially quoted Exodus 3:2-6; here the Angel of God said, "I am that I am, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, the God of Jacob, the God of thy fathers". Justin did not say Jesus was a *created* angel, inferior to God, as the Watch Tower would have us believe. He did say that Jesus was given the title of "Angel and Apostle", and that Jesus is the God of Abraham.

Irenaeus

The Ante-Nicene Fathers Volume 1 **(PDF pg. 409)**

Irenaeus against Heresies, Book 3, Chapters XX and XXI

"And again, specifying the place of His advent, he says: 'The Lord hath spoken from Zion, and He has uttered His voice from Jerusalem'. And that it is from that region which is towards the south of the inheritance of Judah that the Son of God shall come, **who is God**, and who was from Bethlehem, where the Lord was born [and] will send out His praise through all the earth, thus says the prophet Habakkuk: 'God shall come from the south, and the Holy One from Mount, Effrem. His power covered the heavens over, and the earth is full of His praise. Before His face shall go forth the Word, and His feet shall advance in the plains'. Thus he indicates in clear terms that He is God, and that His advent was [to take place] in Bethlehem, and from Mount Effrem, which is towards the south of the inheritance, and that [He is] man. For he says, 'His feet shall advance in the plains' and this is an indication proper to man(Chapter XXI). 1. **God, then, was made man, and the Lord did Himself save us**." D1

Clement of Alexandria

The Ante-Nicene Fathers Volume 2 **(PDF pg. 177)**

Exhortation to the Heathen, The Instructor, Book 1, Chapter II

"Now, O you, my children, our Instructor is like His Father God, whose son He is, sinless, blameless, and with a soul devoid of passion; God in the form of man, stainless, the minister of His Father's will, the Word who is God, who is in the Father, who is at the Father's right hand, and with the form of God is God. He is to us a spotless image; to Him we are to try with all our might to assimilate our souls. He is wholly free from human passions; wherefore also He alone is judge, because He alone is sinless."

The Ante-Nicene Fathers Volume 2 **(PDF pg. 190)**

Exhortation to the Heathen, The Instructor, Book 1, Chapter VII

"But our Instructor is the holy God Jesus, the Word, who is the guide of all humanity. The loving God Himself is our Instructor." D1

Tertullian

The Ante-Nicene Fathers Volume 3 **(PDF pg. 1107-1108)**

Tertullian, Against Praxeas, Chapter XII

"But in respect of the previous works of the world what says the Scripture? Its first statement indeed is made, when the Son has not yet appeared: 'And God said, Let there be light, and there was light.' Immediately there appears the Word, 'that true light, which lighteth man on his coming into the world', and through Him also came light upon the world. From that moment God willed creation to be effected in the Word, Christ being present and ministering unto Him: and so God created. And God said, 'Let there be a firmament,

and God made the firmament' and God also said. 'Let there be lights (in the firmament); and so God made a greater and a lesser light'. But all the rest of the created things did He in like manner make, who made the former ones—I mean the Word of God. 'through whom all things were made, and without whom nothing was made'. Now if He too is God, according to John, (who says.) 'The Word was God', then you have two Beings—One that commands that the thing be made and the Other that executes the order and creates. In what sense, however, you ought to understand Him to be another. I have already explained, on the ground of Personality, not of Substance—in the way of distinction, not of division. But although I must everywhere hold one only substance in three coherent and inseparable (Persons)." D1

Hippolytus

The Ante-Nicene Fathers Volume 5 **(PDF pg. 434)**

The Extant Works and Fragments of Hippolytus, Part 2
Dogmatical and Historical, Against the Heresy of One Noetus

"6. Let us look next at the apostle's word: 'Whose are the fathers, of whom as concerning the flesh Christ came, who is over all, God blessed forever'. This word declares the mystery of the truth rightly and clearly. He who is over all is God; for thus He speaks boldly, 'All things are delivered unto me of my Father. 'He who is over all, God blessed, has been born; and having been made man, He is (yet) God forever. For to this effect John also has said, 'Which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty.' And well has he named Christ the Almighty." D1

Origen

The Ante-Nicene Fathers Volume 4 **(PDF pg. 1149)**

Origen Against Celsus, Book 7, Chapter XLIV

"But he prays for no trivial blessings, for he has learnt from Jesus to seek for nothing small or mean, that is, sensible objects, but to ask only for what is great and truly divine; and these things God grants to us, to lead us to that blessedness which is found only with Him through His Son, the Word, who is God."D1

The Ante-Nicene Fathers Volume 4 **(PDF pg. 466)**

Origen de Principiis, Book 1, Chapter I

"Whatever, therefore, is a property of bodies, cannot be predicated either of the Father or of the Son; but what belongs to the nature of deity is common to the Father and the Son." D1

Anybody who wants to know whether Watch Tower literature is trustworthy should read Jehovah Witnesses' own pamphlet, *Should You Believe in the Trinity?* (pg. 7), and then look up the references for themselves. This pamphlet and the volumes of the Ante-Nicene Fathers are available for free download on my website. Use the PDF page numbers in Adobe Reader to go to the correct page for each quote.

Remember that the *Watch Tower* claims to be a prophet of God, and further claims that we must belong to the Jehovah's Witnesses organization to be qualified to live on Paradise Earth. The *Watch Tower* informs us that we cannot read our Bibles alone, but we also need their literature to help us to have true understanding. One would certainly expect to find their publications to be extremely accurate, if there is any validity to their claims at all. Yet the *Watch Tower* has grossly misrepresented six early Christian writers in this one pamphlet alone. **Keep in mind that this does not mean that your average Jehovah's Witness is untrustworthy; rather, it is the Watch Tower organization that is untrustworthy, deceiving its own followers**.

JW index **pg**. 1, 2

The New World Translation of the Holy Scriptures

The *New World Translation of the Holy Scriptures* is not a good translation at all; it is a biased translation based on Watch Tower doctrine, not on the Greek or Hebrew language.

I will start with a quote from pgs. 72-73 of the book titled *The Kingdom of the Cults,* by Walter Martin. (This court transcript "Walsh Trial is available on my website in PDF form)

"Let it be remembered that the New World Bible Translation Committee had no known translators with recognized degrees in Greek or Hebrew exegesis or translation. In fact, Frederick W. Franz, then representing the translation committee and now the Watchtower Society's fourth president, admitted under oath that he could not translate Genesis 2:4 from the Hebrew.

From the Pursuer's Proof of cross-examination held on Wednesday, November 24, 1954, p.7, paragraphs A-B, Examining Fred W. Franz, vice-president of the Watchtower [sic] Bible and Tract Society and sent as representative of the Society and the Translation Communications:

Have you made yourself familiar with Hebrew?
(Franz) Yes.
So that you have a substantial linguistic apparatus at your command?
Yes, for use in biblical work.
I think that you are able to read and follow the Bible in Hebrew, Greek, Latin, Spanish, Portuguese, German and French?
Yes.

Later, during the same cross-examination:

You, yourself, read and speak Hebrew, do you?
I do not speak Hebrew.
You do not?
No.
Can you, yourself, translate that into Hebrew?
Which?
That fourth verse in the second chapter in Genesis?
You mean here?
Yes.
No.

We asked a Hebrew teacher at Biola University/Talbot Theological Seminary if the fourth verse in the second chapter of Genesis was a particularly difficult verse to translate. After all, the pursuer's question would hardly have been fair if it were the hardest verse in the Old Testament to translate. The professor said that he would never pass a first year Hebrew student who could not translate that verse. This is an example of the 'scholarship' backing the NWT."(End of quote) A31

Go to Walsh Trial PDF book then look up page.7, paragraphs A-B and Then Page.102, paragraph E-F and onto page 103.

There is a lot more said in Walter Martin's book *Kingdom of the Cults* for those who care to read it. This book is now also available in MP3 audio. (Links go to Christian Book Distributers)

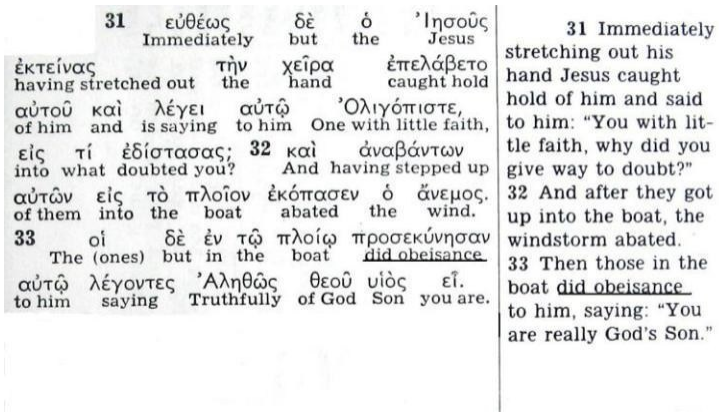
I have examined and found some problems trusting the *New World Translation* that I would like to share with you here.

I have the *Kingdom Interlinear Translation of the Greek Scriptures 1985 Edition* copyright by the Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society. A Greek Interlinear shows both the original Greek language as well as the direct translation into English below the word. The full text in English is off to the side. I have included copies of some of these texts with my added comments for you on the following pages.

The 1985 *Kingdom Interlinear* on page 5 states: **(PDF pg.5)**
(Note: The PDF version is 1969 and slightly different in places. Still my points remain the same)

"The Kingdom Interlinear English translation is specifically designed to open up to the student of the Sacred Scriptures what the original *koine'* Greek basically or literally says." A25

Take note of a couple of things in the following two copies from the 1985 *Kingdom Interlinear*. **Take a good look at the Greek word translated as "did obeisance" in Matthew 14:33 and the same exact Greek word translated as "worshiped" in Revelation 7:11:**

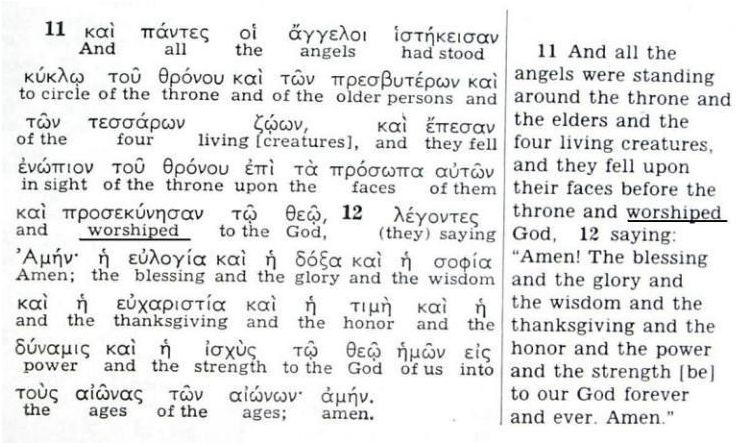


31 εὐθέως δὲ ὁ Ἰησοῦς
Immediately but the Jesus
ἐκτείνας τὴν χεῖρα ἐπελάβετο
having stretched out the hand caught hold
αὐτοῦ καὶ λέγει αὐτῷ Ὀλιγόπιστε,
of him and is saying to him One with little faith,
εἰς τί ἐδίστασας; 32 καὶ ἀναβάντων
into what doubted you? And having stepped up
αὐτῶν εἰς τὸ πλοῖον ἐκόπασεν ὁ ἄνεμος.
of them into the boat abated the wind.
33 οἱ δὲ ἐν τῷ πλοίῳ προσεκύνησαν
The (ones) but in the boat did obeisance
αὐτῷ λέγοντες Ἀληθῶς θεοῦ υἱὸς εἶ.
to him saying Truthfully of God Son you are.

31 Immediately stretching out his hand Jesus caught hold of him and said to him: "You with little faith, why did you give way to doubt?" 32 And after they got up into the boat, the windstorm abated. 33 Then those in the boat did obeisance to him, saying: "You are really God's Son."

Matthew 14: 31 -33
(PDF pg.49)

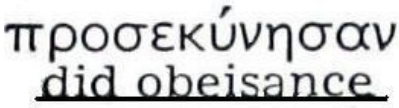
Table of Contents pg 1, 2, 3, 4 Jehovah Witness Index pg. 1, 2



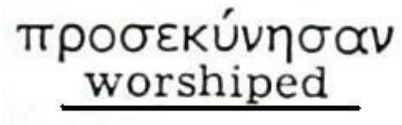
11 καὶ πάντες οἱ ἄγγελοι ἱστήκεισαν
And all the angels had stood
κύκλῳ τοῦ θρόνου καὶ τῶν πρεσβυτέρων καὶ
to circle of the throne and of the older persons and
τῶν τεσσάρων ζῴων, καὶ ἔπεσαν
of the four living [creatures], and they fell
ἐνώπιον τοῦ θρόνου ἐπὶ τὰ πρόσωπα αὐτῶν
in sight of the throne upon the faces of them
καὶ προσεκύνησαν τῷ θεῷ, 12 λέγοντες
and worshiped to the God, (they) saying
Ἀμήν· ἡ εὐλογία καὶ ἡ δόξα καὶ ἡ σοφία
Amen; the blessing and the glory and the wisdom
καὶ ἡ εὐχαριστία καὶ ἡ τιμὴ καὶ ἡ
and the thanksgiving and the honor and the
δύναμις καὶ ἡ ἰσχὺς τῷ θεῷ ἡμῶν εἰς
power and the strength to the God of us into
τοὺς αἰῶνας τῶν αἰώνων· ἀμήν.
the ages of the ages; amen.

11 And all the angels were standing around the throne and the elders and the four living creatures, and they fell upon their faces before the throne and worshiped God, 12 saying: "Amen! The blessing and the glory and the wisdom and the thanksgiving and the honor and the power and the strength [be] to our God forever and ever. Amen."

Revelation 7:11-12
(PDF pg. 552)



Matthew 14:33
PDF pg. 49



Revelation 7:11
(PDF pg. 552)

You do not have to be able to read Greek to see that these two Greek words that I copied and pasted are the same.

It seems as though the Watch Tower has changed the English translation of the Greek word. It appears that this Greek word was not translated two different ways to be true to the translation of the Greek, but rather to try to be consistent with Watch Tower theology.

In the context of Revelation 7: 11, we have worship of Jehovah God. In the context of Matthew 14:33 we have worship of Jesus. The Watch Tower cannot have the Bible showing worship to Jesus; this would be in direct conflict with their teachings, as they do not believe that Jesus is God or that He should be worshiped. Jesus Himself stated that worship belonged to God alone. Matthew 4:10" "Then Jesus said to him, 'Be gone, Satan! For it is written, "You shall worship the Lord your God, and serve Him only."' (See also Luke 4:8.)

Since Jesus did not rebuke them for worshiping Him in the boat in Matthew 14:33, this would make Jesus God. Therefore Watch Tower had to change the Bible to fit their theology, as they do not believe that Jesus is God. This is not being true to the translation from Greek into English.

ΚΑΤΑ ΙΩΑΝΗΝ

ACCORDING TO JOHN

1 Ἐν ἀρχῇ ἦν ὁ λόγος, καὶ ὁ λόγος
In beginning was the Word, and the Word
ἦν πρὸς τὸν θεόν, καὶ θεὸς ἦν ὁ λόγος.
was toward the God, and god was the Word.
2 Οὗτος ἦν ἐν ἀρχῇ πρὸς τὸν θεόν.
This (one) was in beginning toward the God.
3 πάντα δι' αὐτοῦ ἐγένετο, καὶ
All (things) through him came to be, and
χωρὶς αὐτοῦ ἐγένετο οὐδὲ ἕν.
apart from him came to be not-but one (thing).
ὃ γέγονεν
Which has come to be

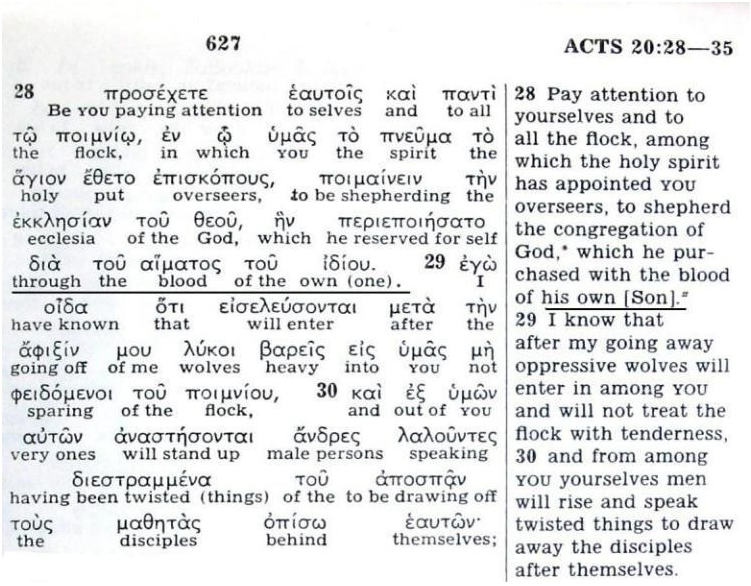
1 In [the] beginning the Word was, and the Word was with God, and the Word was a god.* 2 This one was in [the] beginning with God. 3 All things came into existence through him, and apart from him not even one thing came into existence.

John 1:1-3
(PDF pg.210)

Notice that the word “a’ is not under the direct translation from the Greek — yet it is added into the text on the right. Adding the word "a" to John 1:1, which is clearly not in the direct translation, the meaning of the verse is changed. Why would the Watch Tower add a word not found in the Greek, and change the meaning of the text? I believe that the change was made to change the Bible to fit their theology. Otherwise it would read as other translations, which make Jesus out to be God.

John 1:1: “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.” (NAS)

John 1:14: “And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth.” (NAS)



627 ACTS 20:28—35

28 προσέχετε ἑαυτοῖς καὶ παντὶ
Be you paying attention to selves and to all
τῷ ποιμνίῳ, ἐν ᾧ ὑμᾶς τὸ πνεῦμα τὸ
the flock, in which you the spirit the
ἅγιον ἔθετο ἐπισκόπους, ποιμαίνειν τὴν
holy put overseers, to be shepherding the
ἐκκλησίαν τοῦ θεοῦ, ἣν περιεποιήσατο
ecclesia of the God, which he reserved for self
διὰ τοῦ αἵματος τοῦ ἰδίου. 29 ἐγὼ
through the blood of the own (one). I
οἶδα ὅτι εἰσελεύσονται μετὰ τὴν
have known that will enter after the
ἄφιξίν μου λύκοι βαρεῖς εἰς ὑμᾶς μὴ
going off of me wolves heavy into you not
φειδόμενοι τοῦ ποιμνίου, 30 καὶ ἐξ ὑμῶν
sparing of the flock, and out of you
αὐτῶν ἀναστήσονται ἄνδρες λαλοῦντες
very ones will stand up male persons speaking
διεστραμμένα τοῦ ἀποσπᾶν
having been twisted (things) of the to be drawing off
τοὺς μαθητὰς ὀπίσω ἑαυτῶν·
the disciples behind themselves;

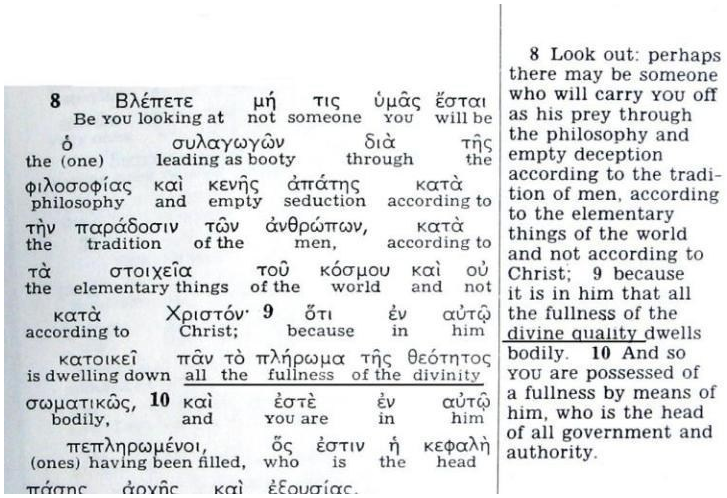
28 Pay attention to yourselves and to all the flock, among which the holy spirit has appointed you overseers, to shepherd the congregation of God,* which he purchased with the blood of his own [Son].*
29 I know that after my going away oppressive wolves will enter in among you and will not treat the flock with tenderness, 30 and from among you yourselves men will rise and speak twisted things to draw away the disciples after themselves.

Acts 20:28-30
(PDF pg.325)

Looking at the 1985 *Kingdom Interlinear* published by Watch Tower, we can see that the word (Son) is not in the direct translation of the Greek. Why would the word (Son) need to be added to the text? Again, I believe it was added to change the Bible to their theology. Following is how this text appears in the New American Standard:

Acts 20:28: "Be on guard for yourselves and for all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood."

It is true that the church of God was purchased by the blood of Jesus, who is called the Son of God. However, that is not what Luke wrote in the Book of Acts. Luke was the author of the Book of Acts, and throughout attacks on the Bible Luke has earned credibility as a reliable Historian. Luke chose to say that God purchased the church with "His own blood". Why should the Watch Tower have the say authority to declare that Luke wrote it incorrectly?



8 Βλέπετε Be you looking at	μή not	τις someone	ὑμᾶς you	ἔσται will be	
ὁ the (one)	συλαγωγῶν leading as booty		διὰ through	τῆς the	
φιλοσοφίας philosophy	καὶ and	κενῆς empty	ἀπάτης seduction	κατὰ according to	
τὴν παράδοσιν the tradition	τῶν of the	ἀνθρώπων, men,		κατὰ according to	
τὰ στοιχεῖα the elementary things	τοῦ of the	κόσμου world	καὶ and	οὐ not	
κατὰ according to	Χριστόν· 9 ὅτι Christ; because		ἐν in	αὐτῷ him	
κατοικεῖ is dwelling down	πᾶν τὸ πλήρωμα τῆς θεότητος all the fullness of the divinity				
σωματικῶς, 10 καὶ bodily, and		ἐστὲ you are	ἐν in	αὐτῷ him	
πεπληρωμένοι, (ones) having been filled,	ὅς who	ἐστιν is	ἡ the	κεφαλὴ head	
πάσης ἀρχῆς καὶ ἐξουσίας.					

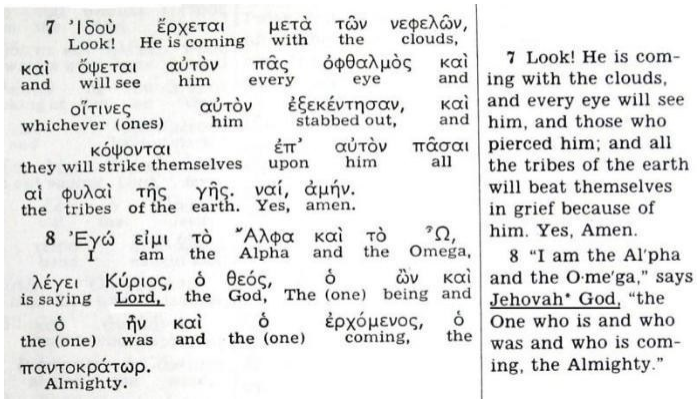
8 Look out: perhaps there may be someone who will carry you off as his prey through the philosophy and empty deception according to the tradition of men, according to the elementary things of the world and not according to Christ; 9 because it is in him that all the fullness of the divine quality dwells bodily. 10 And so you are possessed of a fullness by means of him, who is the head of all government and authority.

Colossians 2:9
(PDF pg. 454)

In Colossians 2:9 we can see that the word "quality" was added by the Watch Tower even though this word is not in the direct translation of the Greek. By adding the word "quality", the meaning of the passage is changed. The literal translation in the *Kingdom Interlinear* reads, "Because in him is dwelling down all the fullness of divinity bodily."

Why would the Watch Tower add the word "quality", when even their publication shows that this word is not in the Greek? I believe it was added because without it, the verse shows that Jesus is both God and man. This is contrary to Watch Tower doctrine; once again, I suggest that it is not the Bible that needs changing, but rather the doctrine of Watch Tower that needs changing.

Jesus does not exhibit a Godlike “divine quality”, as stated in the *New World Translation;* rather in Him is “the fullness of God” in bodily form.
Colossians 2:9: “For in Him all the fullness of Deity dwells in bodily form…” (NAS)
Colossians 2:9: “For in him dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily.” (KJV)



7 Ἰδοὺ ἔρχεται μετὰ τῶν νεφελῶν,
Look! He is coming with the clouds,
καὶ ὄψεται αὐτὸν πᾶς ὀφθαλμὸς καὶ
and will see him every eye and
οἵτινες αὐτὸν ἐξεκέντησαν, καὶ
whichever (ones) him stabbed out, and
κόψονται ἐπ' αὐτὸν πᾶσαι
they will strike themselves upon him all
αἱ φυλαὶ τῆς γῆς. ναί, ἀμήν.
the tribes of the earth. Yes, amen.
8 Ἐγώ εἰμι τὸ Ἄλφα καὶ τὸ Ω,
I am the Alpha and the Omega,
λέγει Κύριος, ὁ θεός, ὁ ὢν καὶ
is saying Lord, the God, The (one) being and
ὁ ἦν καὶ ὁ ἐρχόμενος, ὁ
the (one) was and the (one) coming, the
παντοκράτωρ.
Almighty.

7 Look! He is coming with the clouds, and every eye will see him, and those who pierced him; and all the tribes of the earth will beat themselves in grief because of him. Yes, Amen.
8 "I am the Al'pha and the O·me'ga," says Jehovah* God, "the One who is and who was and who is coming, the Almighty."

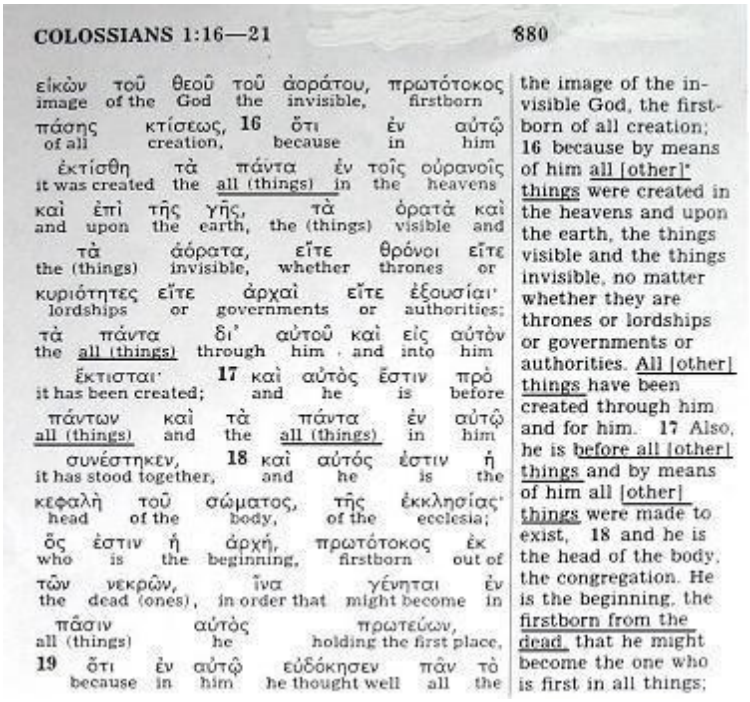
Revelation 1:8
(PDF pg. 542)

The direct translation of Revelation 1:8 shows the word "Lord" as a direct translation. The N.W.T., on the right, translates this as "Jehovah God". Certainly Jehovah is Lord, but why change the wording? I believe it is because the context from the previous verse makes Jesus out to be God. They are trying to make it appear as though the speakers changed between verses 7 and 8. (Note: In verse 11 we have first and last Alpha and Omega; then in verse 17-18 the first and last died and rose again which of course is Jesus)

The same Greek word used here in Revelation 1: 8, translated as “Lord” or “Jehovah God”, is also used in John 20:25, where it is specifically used concerning Jesus. This can be confirmed in the back of any *Strong's Concordance* using the *Strong's* numbering system. Both places use the word number 2962.

John 20:25: “The other disciples therefore were saying to him, ‘We have seen the Lord!’ But he said to them, ‘Unless I shall see in His hands the imprint of the nails, and put my finger into the place of the nails, and put my hand into His side, I will not believe.’”

(PDF pg. 453)



COLOSSIANS 1:16—21 880

εἰκὼν τοῦ θεοῦ τοῦ ἀοράτου, πρωτότοκος
image of the God the invisible, firstborn
πάσης κτίσεως, 16 ὅτι ἐν αὐτῷ
of all creation, because in him
ἐκτίσθη τὰ πάντα ἐν τοῖς οὐρανοῖς
it was created the all (things) in the heavens
καὶ ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς, τὰ ὁρατὰ καὶ
and upon the earth, the (things) visible and
τὰ ἀόρατα, εἴτε θρόνοι εἴτε
the (things) invisible, whether thrones or
κυριότητες εἴτε ἀρχαὶ εἴτε ἐξουσίαι·
lordships or governments or authorities;
τὰ πάντα δι' αὐτοῦ καὶ εἰς αὐτὸν
the all (things) through him and into him
ἔκτισται· 17 καὶ αὐτός ἐστιν πρὸ
it has been created; and he is before
πάντων καὶ τὰ πάντα ἐν αὐτῷ
all (things) and the all (things) in him
συνέστηκεν, 18 καὶ αὐτός ἐστιν ἡ
it has stood together, and he is the
κεφαλὴ τοῦ σώματος, τῆς ἐκκλησίας·
head of the body, of the ecclesia;
ὅς ἐστιν ἡ ἀρχή, πρωτότοκος ἐκ
who is the beginning, firstborn out of
τῶν νεκρῶν, ἵνα in order that γένηται ἐν
the dead (ones), might become in
πᾶσιν αὐτὸς πρωτεύων,
all (things) he holding the first place,
19 ὅτι ἐν αὐτῷ εὐδόκησεν πᾶν τὸ
because in him he thought well all the

the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation; 16 because by means of him all [other] things were created in the heavens and upon the earth, the things visible and the things invisible, no matter whether they are thrones or lordships or governments or authorities. All [other] things have been created through him and for him. 17 Also, he is before all [other] things and by means of him all [other] things were made to exist, 18 and he is the head of the body, the congregation. He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that he might become the one who is first in all things;

In Colossians 1:16-17 we can see that the Watch Tower added the word "other" four different times. The word "other" does not appear in the direct translation of the Greek.

In context, this passage is speaking about Jesus. The New American Standard translates this passage as follows:

Colossians 1:16: “For by Him all things were created, both in the heavens and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities — all things have been created by Him and for Him.”

Why would the Watch Tower add the word "other" four different times when it is not in the original Greek? I believe it was added because without this addition, the verse refutes the doctrine that Jehovah created Jesus, and then through Jesus created all other things. Of course, this doctrine still falls apart when you read Isaiah 44:24

Isaiah 44:24: “Thus says the LORD, your Redeemer, and the one who formed you from the womb, ‘I, the LORD, am the maker of all things, stretching out the heavens by myself, and spreading out the earth all alone.’” (NAS)

Colossians 1:16 says that Jesus created, but *Jesus is God*; therefore, God is accurate in Isaiah to claim that He created and made all things “alone”, and by Himself. But if one takes the view that Jehovah created Jesus, and then through Jesus created all "other" things, then we have a problem with Isaiah 44: 24.

We have shown that the Watch Tower claims to be a prophet of God; yet the organization has been proven to be a false prophet. The Watch Tower claims that we must read Watch Tower literature in addition to the Bible — but they lied about what the early church writers said concerning the deity of Christ and the Trinity. The Watch Tower has misrepresented the doctrine of the Trinity, and tried to refute it based upon their false definition. Words in the Bible have been changed and added, in an attempt to force the Word of God to align with Watch Tower doctrine. The Watch Tower presents us with a different God, a different Jesus, a different Holy Spirit and a different Gospel than which we find in the Bible.

Table of Contents pg 1, 2, 3, 4

Life stories and lessons learned:

The Tree
The Truck
Andy the Dog's Birthday

THE TREE

Years back I had rented some property in the Applegate area in Southern Oregon to put up my teepee. I have to date lived in a teepee for seven winters. I have found it to be a cheaper way to live in the country than renting a house. Anyway I had set it up in a nice clearing in the trees across Thompson Creek and a little ways up a hill.

The first winter there worked out pretty good. However the second winter there the creek, which normally does not get very deep, rose up pretty high. It was all I could do to keep from being washed downstream while wading across the creek to get to the teepee.

I went over and asked my landlord if I could fall a tree across the creek to use as a bridge. I was informed that I could not do that. Somebody there suggested that I go home and pray about it. So that is what I did. I went home and prayed for a tree to fall over.

The next day I waded across the creek changed into some dry clothes and drove to work. I continued to pray while I was at work. After work I decided to go to Bi-Mart and buy some rope. I thought perhaps maybe I could figure out a way to make a temporary rope bridge to get across the creek.

While I was at the store I had a very strong feeling that I did not need the rope and that perhaps I should just drive home and see if a tree fell over. I argued with myself, thinking that was crazy. It would easily be an hour-and-a-half drive, round trip just to come back to buy the rope. So logic won out and I bought the rope and proceeded to drive home.

When I had arrived I was shocked to see that there was a large tree lying across the dirt drive where I normally parked. It looked like the butt of the tree was on the other side of the creek. I was in awe to say the least! Then I proceeded to reason with myself and thought perhaps my landlord had changed her mind and had somebody else cut down a tree for me. I got out of my car and decided to investigate the matter. I was in awe again. A live tree, about 3-feet through the center, had come up by the roots and fell across the creek near where I normally crossed at.

I pondered the whole thing for a while, and then went back to my car. I tried to back up, but the dirt drive was pretty muddy and the tires just spun. So I went forward a little bit more instead. Of course I could not go very far because the top of the tree was in the way. I then remembered that my chainsaw was at my friend's house back in town. I began to become frustrated. Now what am I going to do? I got out of my car and was looking at the top part of the tree. I had not noticed before that the tree actually had broken in several places starting at the edge of the drive and was now pieces that I could move by hand. Wow! The Lord is gracious and He thinks of everything.

My landlord also had come to inspect the tree. Of course she knew nobody could just pull up a large tree like that by the roots. Interestingly the day it fell over there was no storm and the part that fell over the creek did not break. Later that following summer I cut up and split the top part of the tree and hauled it over to my landlord's house so she could burn it for firewood.

Ironically when my mom died I was sitting on this tree and yelling at God. I was very angry at Him because I thought He should have made her live long enough to accept Him. As I was yelling at Him it came across in my mind so loud and clear it could not have been clearer, if I had actually heard an audible voice. ***"Even if she did reject Me, is that a reason for you to reject Me?"*** I was speechless and my tantrum was over!

This will always be a personal reminder to me that the Lord cares about the details in my life!

Topic Index

THE TRUCK

God sometimes answers our prayers not only to help us, but also to show others that He is real and at work in our lives.

Not long after I became a Christian I had decided to spend a semester at Calvary Chapel Bible School down in Southern California.

As I made my plans and started saving the money needed to go, I had a friend named Jack that tried to talk me out of it. He kept telling me that “this Christianity thing” was just a phase I was going through. “Don't waste your money” he would argue; use it for something worthwhile.

I ignored his advice and when I had saved enough for a semester I enrolled and was on my way. I had decided to leave my truck at home and take the bus down to Southern California.
After Bible school was over I came back home and found that my truck would not start. Jack was pretty good about working on cars so I asked him for some help. We worked on the truck all day and could not figure out why it refused to start.

Jack finally gave up and went home. Not long after he had left my Pastor, Earl Best from Provolt Community Church, came by. Earl told me he heard I was back and just wanted to stop by and see how I was doing and learn how my time at Bible school went. I told him everything was great except my truck would not start. Earl told me he had a toolbox in his truck and would be glad to help me with it. I objected telling him that my friend Jack and I had already spent the whole day working on it and got nowhere. Earl insisted that it couldn't hurt so I said ok. Earl got out his toolbox and set it next to my truck.

Then Earl asked me if I had prayed about it. Reluctantly I admitted that that had not occurred to me. So Earl suggested that we get down on our knees and pray. After we prayed Earl suggested that I get in the truck and start it up.

I remember looking at him like he was nuts. ***As if that was really going to work***, but I did as he said and much to my surprise the truck started immediately with no problem at all. Earl smiled and quietly put his toolbox back in his truck, said goodbye, and left.

Thrilled that my truck was working I decided to drive down to Applegate store. I ran into Jack at the store who came over asking me what was wrong with the truck and how did I fix it? I told Jack that I did not know what was wrong with the truck.

Jack looked at me with a rather puzzled look and asked again. How did you fix it? So I told Jack about how the Pastor came over and suggested we pray about it and then the truck started right up.

Jack was speechless! He also quit teasing me about being a Christian and trying to convince me it was all in my head. I believe that that particular answered prayer was for both me and Jack.

Topic Index

My Dogs Birthday

It is my dog's birthday today. He just turned four years old. Andy is a big boy now he grew up way too fast. His mother is a yellow Labrador, one of the tallest I've ever seen. I was told his father is a Rottweiler and he does have the markings of one. Andy was a big pup right out of the oven. I chose him from a litter of ten based on his tri-colors of black, tan and cream. He seemed to have a gentle nature, he didn't fuss in my arms when I turned him upside down and held him like a baby. He wouldn't stare me in the eyes and showed no signs of aggression. I knew I had found my companion.

People always made comments about the size of Andy's paws. They are quite large and he never grew into them. As he grew and grew so did they. I would make fun of him and call him Ronald McDonald because of his big clown shoes. So, fittingly I named him Andy Little-paw. He turned out to be the best dog I ever had. He is 120 pounds of pure, silly, unconditional love.

For his birthday I thought it would be nice to take Andy to the dog park to play with his pals. Then take him to our local Grange Co-op where dogs are invited to shop with their owners. Andy likes to go there because he gets to go in the store to pick out his own treats and see other lucky dogs that get to shop too.

As I was getting ready to go I made the mistake of telling Andy “You wanna go to the park?" Well, that did it. He started dancing and wiggling and running to the door. He was acting like he just drank 12 cups of coffee with 10 spoons of sugar. I tried to explain to him that I didn't mean right now, that I still had things I needed to do before we could go. As I spoke he tilted his head back and forth in an effort to understand. He waited with anticipation and bolted to the door any time I went in that direction. He followed me around waiting for the "OK let's go". After a while he jumped up on the bed and waited with his head down between his front legs. Now watching me get ready by only moving his eyes he didn't even raise his head.

As time went on his excitement faded into disappointment. I couldn't help thinking how much we are like that when it comes to God. Just like Andy, we hear the word and get excited. We wait with anticipation for the good things promised and when they don't happen when we want them to we get disappointed. We may start off with great excitement and ready to run but that soon fades when we don't see results or reward for our efforts. Just like God, I knew I was going to do the things I said I would do. And just like Andy we don't understand the wait or the reasons for the wait. We get so disappointed we find it hard to even raise our heads and only look to God with our eyes and not our hearts.

I was thinking of how God's thoughts are so far above ours that if he tried to explain things to us we would be like dogs turning our heads from side to side trying to understand even one word from Him. It would be like trying to explain physics to an infant.

So... next time you tell your dog or a child about a trip to some place that makes them so excited they can't wait, Remember God is taking us to a place that is so exciting that it's hard for us to wait too. But there are still some things God needs to do first. Just because it's not coming as fast as we want it to doesn't mean that it's not coming at all. God does have a great place for us; and I for one am doing a wiggle dance in excited anticipation to get there.

Linda Carlini

Table of Contents pg 1, 2, 3, 4

STATEMENT OF FAITH

We believe the Bible is the inspired Word of God. The transmission of the Greek and Hebrew text has faithfully preserved God's Word and the doctrine within it is without contradiction. The Bible reveals to us the nature of our God, how to come to know and belong to Him, and also the manner in which we should live (2 Timothy 3:16, 2 Peter 3:16, Isaiah 40:8, John 20:31, Romans 15:4).

We believe the doctrine commonly referred to as the Trinity, meaning there is only one living and true God that exists as three persons: God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit (Isaiah 44:8, Isaiah 48:12-16, Romans 1:7, John 1:1-14, Acts 5:3-4).

We believe that Jesus Christ is the promised Messiah as foretold in the Old Testament. He was born miraculously to the Virgin Mary when the Holy Spirit came upon her and the power of the Most High overshadowed her and for that reason the holy offspring was called the Son of God (Daniel 9:25, John 4:25-26, Luke 1:35).

We believe that the Gospel of Jesus Christ is that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and that He was buried, and that He was literally physically and bodily raised from the dead on the third day, according to the Scriptures, and as He, Himself, said He would be. He is today at the right hand of the Father interceding for those who belong to Him (1 Corinthians 15:1-4, John 2:19-22 and 10:14-18, Acts 2:23-33, Psalm 16:10, Luke 22:69, Mark 16:19, 1 Timothy 2:5-6, Hebrews 7:25).

We believe that all mankind are born with a sinful nature, ever since Adam's transgression. No one by his own deeds or merits has ever been, or ever will be, good enough to be with the Lord in the life to come (Romans 5:14-21, Isaiah 64:6, Psalm 39:5, Romans 3:19-28, 1 John 1:10, Philippians 3:3-9).

We believe that eternal life is a free gift of God, which cannot be earned, but is received by those who have accepted Jesus' payment for their sins on the cross. Those who have accepted Jesus and His payment are changed people and are spiritually re-born, adopted into the family of God (Ephesians 2:8, Romans 3:19-28, 2 Corinthians 5:17, John 3:3, Galatians 4:5, Romans 8:13-17, 1 Peter 2:24).

We believe that Satan and his fallen angels are real, and that Hell is a literal place that was prepared for them. There is now at this time spiritual warfare taking place here on the earth (Matthew 4:1-10, James 2:19, Matthew 25:41, Matthew 10:28, Mark 9:43-48, Ephesians 6:11-18, 2 Corinthians 10:4).

We believe that Jesus Christ will again bodily return; while no one knows exactly when this will take place, it will indeed happen as has other Biblical prophecy. All prophecy that has not yet been fulfilled will be fulfilled (Acts 1:9-11, Revelation 1:7, Matthew 24:36, Matthew 5:18, Ezekiel 12:25, Habakkuk 2:2-3, Deuteronomy 18:21-22).

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Table of Contents **pg 1, 2, 3, 4**

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